

THE PILGRIM'S GUIDE  
TO IMPORTANT SITES IN  
**MAKKAH & MADĪNAH**

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# **The Pilgrimage**





God, Majestic and Exalted is He, says in the Qur’ān: “*It is the duty of all men towards God to go on pilgrimage to the House, for those who are able to make their way there*” [3:97].

And the Prophet ﷺ said, “Islam is built on five [things]: the testimony that there is no god save God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, performing the ritual prayer, paying out the *ṣakāh*, performing the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and fasting Ramaḍān” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, 2, *Tafsīr sūrah* 2; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, 19].

Thus the pilgrimage is the fourth of the five pillars of Islam and one of the most important religious obligations. It is also one of the greatest joys in the life of a Muslim. Its rewards and blessings are immense. The Messenger of God ﷺ said, “He who performs his pilgrimage, avoiding obscenity and corrupt behaviour, will come out of his sins [pure] as the day his mother gave birth to him” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 4]. And when asked, “Which works are best?” he replied, “Belief in God and His Messenger.” They said, “Then which?” He said, “Fighting for the cause of God.” They said, “Then which?” He said, “An accepted pilgrimage” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 4, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 47; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, 135]. He also said, “One *‘umrah* (lesser pilgrimage) succeeding another expiates whatever occurs between them, and the accepted *ḥajj* (greater pilgrimage) has no reward short of the Garden [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-‘Umrah*, 1; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 437]. And he said, “Repeat *ḥajj* and *‘umrah*, for they expel poverty and sins just as the furnace expels impurities from iron, gold, or silver. An accepted *ḥajj* has no reward short of the Garden” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 2; al-Nasā’ī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 6, 50]. And he prayed for the pilgrims saying, “O God! Forgive the pilgrim and he for whom the pilgrim asks forgiveness” [Al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1:609, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 5:261; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, 3:122]. And he said, “The *jihād* of the elderly, the weak, and the women is *ḥajj* and *‘umrah* [al-Nasā’ī, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 4; Aḥmad, 2:421].

As for the Ramaḍān *‘umrah*, its reward is truly astounding, for it equals a *ḥajj* in the company of the Prophet ﷺ [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-‘Umra*, 4]. And what other blessing can excel that?

A further special attribute of the pilgrimage is that money spent on it attracts a reward equal to that of money spent on *jihād*. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Spending in *ḥajj* is like spending in the way of God [*jihād*]; [the reward] is seven hundredfold” [Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 3:122].

Hoping to please God and obtain the divine gifts here mentioned, and those many more left unsaid, pilgrims flock in their millions to Makkah and Madīnah—to the land of al-Ḥijāz.

***Al-Ḥijāz***



Al-Hijāz was never a well-demarcated geographical area; various authorities give various definitions. However, most would consider it to extend along the Red Sea coast from the southern edges of the Syrian desert to the northern borders of Yemen. The interior of the Arabian Peninsula is called Najd, which means “high.” The Hijāz area has always had a special attraction for Muslims, for not only does it contain the two Noble Sanctuaries, Makkah and Madīnah, but has witnessed the Prophet’s movements ﷺ and those of his Companions رضي الله عنهم as they emigrated from Makkah to Madīnah to escape persecution, raided Qurayshi caravans, and rode on numerous military expeditions, finally entering Makkah as conquerors. The area is thus a blessed one. History tells us of a multitude of sites where the Prophet ﷺ halted, camped, prayed, made *du‘ā’*, fought, performed the rites of pilgrimage, and taught his Companions. Every valley, every pass has its history. From the days of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdal-‘Azīz, who was governor of Madīnah from AH 77 to 83 before he assumed the caliphate, mosques were erected to mark the locations where these important events took place, and some of these are still in existence [Ibn Shabbah, 1:74].

As for the two Noble Sanctuaries, Makkah is the most primordial site dedicated to the worship of God on the surface of this planet, for Ādam عليه السلام, the first human being, worshipped his Lord there, when the House was a small round mound of earth around which angels circumambulated. The *Ka‘bah*, built by Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is to remain the *qiblah* of worshippers till the end of time.

Muslims from all over the world travel to Makkah, incurring hardship and expense, to perform the pilgrimage and go through the rites, weeping and imploring God to forgive them. Once the rites are over, they relax, certain that they have been forgiven, as promised by God through His Prophet ﷺ. Then they travel to Madīnah, where they are received by the lights of the city of he who is a Mercy to the Worlds ﷺ. Here they bask in the certitude of the promise of his intercession on Judgement Day.

Madīnah was honoured by God who chose it as the haven for His Beloved Prophet ﷺ and made it dearer to him and his Companions than any other place on earth.

Then the pilgrim returns home, having experienced the awesomeness of Makkah and ‘Arafât, and the gentleness and soothing influence of Madīnah. Henceforth he must preserve the results of his pilgrimage by avoiding sins in the fear of God, and increasing his good works in the hope of God’s mercy. This is the sign of an accepted pilgrimage: the pilgrim should concentrate more on spirituality and less on the mundane, never reverting to how he was before experiencing the blessings of the holy rites and places of God.

**Manners  
of Visiting the  
Two Sanctuaries**





The Messenger of God ﷺ taught his community good manners to be observed in every situation. He taught his people how to speak, dress, walk, eat, sleep, treat elders and youngsters, behave towards the learned and the virtuous, and most central of all, how to behave towards God, His Messengers, Scriptures, and ordinances.

Since visitors to the sanctuaries are in the neighbourhood of either the Prophet or the House of God, they must constantly be aware of this fact. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Jibrīl (Gabriel) has recommended neighbours to me so insistently that I thought he would also allow them to inherit” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 28; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr*, 140]. And he ﷺ said, “He who believes in God and the Last Day, let him honour his neighbour” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Adab*, 31; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, 74]. The visitor to Makkah lives among the neighbours of the House of God, the people of Makkah, while the visitor to Madīnah lives among the Prophet’s neighbours, the people of Madīnah. Every visitor must therefore concentrate on his devotions when in these places, avoid forbidden or frivolous language, wasting time, forgetting one’s Lord, or otherwise diminishing the benefits one should be reaping by the visit. One should avoid bothering worshippers in either of the Sanctuaries and refrain from pushing, shoving, distracting them by one’s loud recitation, crossing over their shoulders, or annoying them in any other way.

As to one’s behaviour towards the people of the Two Sanctuaries, one should not think ill of them, respond angrily if they treat one harshly, or criticize or deride them. The Prophet ﷺ has said, “Madīnah is where I have emigrated; it is my resting place in the earth. It is a duty upon my community to honour my neighbours, so long as they avoid major sins. He who fails to do this shall be given the juice of Hell to drink” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, 3:310]. And he said, “He who harms the people of Madīnah, God shall harm him; upon him shall be the curse of God, the angels, and all people. He shall be granted no reprieve, no way to requite himself” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, 3:306]. Although it is understood that what is meant here is major harm, such as was inflicted on Madīnah by those who have besieged and conquered it, then slaughtered her people, and those who

have oppressed them over the years, one should nevertheless heed the warning even in seemingly small insignificant confrontations. The Prophet ﷺ also said, “The devil has lost hope of ever being worshipped by worshippers in the Arabian Peninsula, but he will sow discord among them” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Munāfiqīn*, 65]. One must therefore avoid friction and discord at all cost. Many scholars have also said that one must not haggle in the shops—if the price is too high, either pay willingly, allowing the people of Madīnah to make extra profit, or politely walk away and go to another shop. One should also refrain from complaining about the weather, the dust, other things in the environment, the facilities, or the people; rather, one should concentrate solely on the blessings and lights he is enjoying, and on his *du‘ā’* which he expects God to accept as promised, for to complain is to show ingratitude and discourtesy instead of thankfulness, contentment, and submission.

**Makkah**



God calls Makkah the “Mother of Cities” in the Qur’ān: “And so We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān, that you may warn the Mother of Cities and those around it...” [6:92].

Although the sacredness of the valley goes back to Ādam ﷺ, its historical significance began with Ibrāhīm ﷺ. Ibrāhīm’s firstborn was Ismā‘īl ﷺ, born to Hājar ﷺ, the Egyptian.

When Ismā‘īl ﷺ was still a baby, God commanded his father to take him and his mother from Palestine to the Arid Valley where the ancient House of Ādam used to be. There were no people in the valley lying between the hills of Makkah, and no wells, trees, nor shrubs. Ibrāhīm ﷺ left Hājar ﷺ and her son there, with a bag full of dates and a water-skin, and then began to walk away. Hājar ﷺ ran after him, clutching at his clothes, exclaiming, “O Ibrāhīm! Where are you going? Will you leave us in this valley, with neither companion nor any other comfort?” He kept walking silently. Seeing this she asked, “Has God commanded you to do this?”

“Yes!” he replied.

“Then He will not abandon us!” she said, turning back and retracing her steps to where she had left her son. Ibrāhīm ﷺ carried on walking until he was out of sight; then he stopped, turned toward the House, raised his hands, and prayed: *“Our Lord! I have made some of my seed to dwell in a valley where there is no vegetation, near Your Sacred House; Our Lord! Let them perform the prayer and make hearts of men yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits that they may be thankful”* [14:37].

Hājar ﷺ suckled her son, ate from the dates, and drank from the water-skin, until she eventually ran out of water, and they both became very thirsty. She began to fear for their lives, and, looking around her, she saw the nearest rise to be the Ṣafā hillock. She headed toward it, climbed it, and looked in every direction for signs of life. Finding none, she walked down, rushed to another hillock, the Marwa, stood on it, and looked around her again. Seeing nothing, she rushed back to the Ṣafā. Seven times she repeated her actions, to no avail. On her last stand on Marwa, she heard something but could not recognize what it was. She returned to her son to find that the Archangel Jibrīl ﷺ had struck the ground with his heel, bringing up

water. He said to her, “Fear not; you will not perish! There is a House here that this boy and [his] father are to build.”

Hājar ﷺ and her son remained near the well until, one day, a caravan of the tribe of Jurhum passed by. They noticed birds circling in the air and knew it as a sign of water. Directed by the birds, they found Hājar ﷺ and Ismā‘īl ﷺ there at the well of Zamzam. Jurhum asked Hājar’s permission to stay, which she willingly granted, glad for company at last, but on condition that the well remain hers.

As he grew up, Ismā‘īl ﷺ learned the Arabic of the Jurhumites, and eventually married one of their women. His father then visited him and saw that this woman was not spiritually fit to be the wife of a prophet and mother of his sons. He advised his son to find a new wife, which he promptly did, and God gave him to wed a saintly woman who bore him many sons, the foremost among whom was the ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ.

Having received the divine command to build the *Ka‘bah*, Ibrāhīm ﷺ returned to Makkah. He informed his son, and together they began to erect the House on the location of the mound of earth of Ādam’s Ancient House ﷺ. Ismā‘īl brought the stones, and Ibrāhīm ﷺ placed them one upon the other, using no mortar. They made the House square on the southern side and rounded on the northern side. There was no roof. A door was left open on the eastern side and to its right; inside the building, a hole was dug in the ground to receive the offerings made to the *Ka‘bah*. When the walls of the *Ka‘bah* rose too high for Ibrāhīm ﷺ to place the stones, Ismā‘īl ﷺ brought a square stone that his father could stand on to reach to the top of the wall. That stone became *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, the Station of Ibrāhīm, and his feet left their imprints where he used to stand.

“*The first House established for the people,*” says the Qur’ān, “*was that at Bakka, blessed it is, and a guidance to all beings. Therein are manifest signs, the Station of Ibrāhīm; and whosoever enters it is secure*” [3:96].

Then God revealed to Ibrāhīm ﷺ further instructions. The Qur’ān says: “*And when We appointed for Ibrāhīm the location of the House: ‘You shall not associate anything with Me. And purify My House for those that shall circumambulate it, those that*

*stand, and those that bow and prostrate themselves. And announce among men the pilgrimage. They shall come to you on foot and upon every lean beast, they shall come from every deep ravine”* [22:26–27].

Ibrāhīm ؑ understood that he was to stand on the mountain and raise his voice with the proclamation of the pilgrimage. He asked, “O God! How will they hear my voice?”

The reply was, “Yours is to proclaim; Ours it is to make it reach them.” So Ibrāhīm ؑ climbed to the top of Mount Abū Qubays and raised his voice, inviting mankind to the pilgrimage; and God caused his voice to reach everyone who is one day to perform the pilgrimage, even before their births into this world. When Ismā‘īl ؑ died, leadership devolved to his son, Nābit. But after Nābit’s death it was taken over by the latter’s Jurhumite maternal grandfather. Leadership remained with Jurhum for hundreds of years. Over time they drifted away from Ismā‘īl’s religion, becoming arrogant and corrupt. They were warned by their leaders of the consequences of their behaviour, but did not listen, and were finally attacked by the tribe of Khuzā‘ah arriving from Yemen. They were defeated; most of them were slain; the remainder dispersed, and Jurhum, as a tribe, disappeared from history.

The descendants of Ismā‘īl ؑ had stayed aloof from the conflict, and the victorious Khuzā‘ah granted them permission to remain in the area—which they did, under the dominance of that tribe for about five centuries.

Both tribes, one succeeding the other around the *Ka‘bah*, as well as the descendants of Ismā‘īl ؑ, left the area immediately adjacent to the House uninhabited and built their dwellings on and within the surrounding hills and valleys. They never entered the area of the House unless ritually pure and never stayed past nightfall.

The tribe of Khuzā‘ah possessed Makkah and controlled the *Ka‘bah* itself until they were outwitted by Quṣay ibn Kilāb, the ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ. By that time, the *Ka‘bah* had acquired a door rather than just an opening, and the door had a key. Quṣay succeeded in wresting that key from Khuzā‘ah. When he had accomplished this, he said to his people, “If you should go down and dwell in the

area around the *Ka'bah*, the people will be in awe of you and will not permit themselves to fight or attack you.” He began this process by building *Dār al-Nadwah*, the council hall, on the northern side of the House, and then the Quraysh built their houses around all four sides of the *Ka'bah*, leaving sufficient room for worshippers to circumambulate the House. It is said that they deliberately made their houses round, not square, so as to make them dissimilar to the *Ka'bah* itself. Their houses were also kept shorter than the *Ka'bah* out of reverence for the House. With time though, the pattern changed. Houses became square and the town grew bigger and more crowded.

Quṣay's observation had been correct, and Quraysh was now held in special esteem by the tribesmen of Arabia because of their guardianship of the House. At the time of the Prophet's birth ﷺ his grandfather, 'Abdal-Muṭṭalib, was considered the chief nobleman of Quraysh. It is he who, by divine intervention, rediscovered the lost well of Zamzam, which still produces water to this day.

## **Merits of Makkah**

One of the names which God Himself has called Makkah is *al-Balad al-Amīn*, the Secure Town [Qur'ān, 95:3]. It is sacred territory which means that it is forbidden to hunt wild animals, cut wild plants, or carry arms within its borders. Non-Muslims are not allowed to enter it, and its dust and pebbles should not be taken out.

## **Limits of the Sacred Territory**

The markers which show the boundaries of the Sacred Territory, *Anṣāb al-Haram*, stand on the four main approaches to Makkah: at Tan'īm, six kilometres from the Sacred Mosque on the road to Madīnah; in the Valley of Nakhla, thirteen kilometres from the Mosque; on the road to Yemen, twelve kilometres South of the Mosque; and just before the plain of 'Arafāt, eighteen kilometers from the Mosque.



The boundary also passes by Ḥudaybiyah and Ji‘rānah. Within this territory, every individual good deed, not just the ritual prayer, is counted a hundred thousand, and every evil deed the same. One is not allowed evil intentions, and unlike other places, is punished for them by God even if they are not carried out: “*He who intends to violate it wrongfully, We shall let him taste a painful torment*” [22:25]. Here the threat of painful torment is for the mere intention to violate the sacredness of the territory.

As he was leaving Makkah to emigrate to Madīnah, the Prophet ﷺ stood on his she-camel, looked back, then said, “By God! You are the best of God’s lands in God’s sight! Had I not been driven out of you, I would not have departed” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 68; Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 103].

## The Sacred Mosque

The Sacred Mosque, *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*, includes the *Ka‘bah* and the area around it where the worshippers circumambulate, pray, and sit, including what is now the surrounding Mosque building.

God, Exalted is He, mentions the Sacred Mosque in the Qur’ān fifteen times. When He honoured His Beloved Prophet ﷺ with the Night Journey and the Ascension through the seven heavens to the Divine Presence, He said, “*Transcendent is He Who made His slave to journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, the precincts of which We have blessed, so as to show him of Our signs. He is the Hearing, the Seeing*” [17:1]. Later on, when the Jews rejected the Message, and the Prophet ﷺ wished to dissociate himself from them by turning to Makkah in his prayers instead of Jerusalem, God, Exalted is He, said, “*We have seen you turning your face about in the heaven; now We will turn you to a direction that shall satisfy you; so turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it*” [2:144]. Thus did He, Exalted is He, give His Beloved the *qiblah* that would gladden his heart. Whenever a Muslim turns toward Makkah to pray, he should remember that the choice was made by the Prophet ﷺ and should thank God and His Prophet ﷺ for such an immense grace.

One special attribute of the Sacred Mosque is that the <sup>ʿ</sup>Īd prayer is better performed within it than in the open, which is opposite to the case everywhere else.

Also, it is said that Ismāʿīl, Hājar, and seventy prophets ﷺ are buried in the *Ḥijr* and around the *Kaʿbah*. Despite this, because of necessity, God has permitted pilgrims to walk over this area in their circumambulations and prayers.

The most important special attribute of the Sacred Mosque is that any ritual prayer performed there attracts a reward one hundred thousand times that of a ritual prayer elsewhere, except for those in Madīnah and Jerusalem, where prayers are also multiplied. The Prophet ﷺ has said, “A prayer in this mosque of mine is better than a thousand prayers elsewhere, except the Sacred Mosque; and a prayer in the Sacred Mosque is better than a hundred thousand prayers elsewhere” [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb Iqāmat al-Ṣalāh*, 195].

## The House

“*And when Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl raised up the foundations of the House, ‘Our Lord! Accept this from us, You are the Hearing, the Knowing!’*” [2:127]

The *Kaʿbah* built by Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl ﷺ was repaired over the years by various tribes, but rebuilt anew by Quraysh about five years before the Prophet ﷺ received the first revelation from heaven. They did not build it in exactly the same manner as the original. The Lady ʿĀʾishah رضي الله عنها said that the Messenger of God ﷺ told her, “O ʿĀʾishah! Were it not that your people are not very far yet from their Days of Ignorance, I would have had this House demolished, so that I would be able to join to it that part which was left out. I would have levelled it to the ground and would have built two doors, an eastern door and a western door, and I would have built it right on the foundations of Ibrāhīm” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 42, *Kitāb al-Anbiyāʾ*, 10, Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 399].

When the Quraysh were rebuilding the *Kaʿbah* and the walls reached sufficient height to receive the Black Stone back into its place, they quarrelled about who would have the honour of placing it in its corner. Dissension and anger escalated almost to the point of spilling blood. As a compromise, they accepted the

suggestion of the oldest man among them that the next man to enter the Sacred Mosque through the gate would be given to judge between them. They saw the Prophet ﷺ arriving by the designated way and rejoiced, “The Trustworthy [*al-Amīn*] has come!” for this was the title with which they used to honour him in those days before the first revelation. His verdict was that they should place the stone in the middle of a cloth carried by the representatives of all the clans; then when they together had brought it to the corner, he, himself, would take it and insert it into its place [Ibn Hishām, 1:197]. Thus was the problem solved and bloodshed averted, and the hands that placed the stone became those of God’s Last Messenger ﷺ. This act was highly symbolic, since the Prophet ﷺ was later to liken himself to the cornerstone which had been left out and which now completed the building representing all previous divine envoys. He ﷺ said, “My likeness and that of the prophets before me is that of a man who built a house, building it soundly and beautifully, except for a brick missing from one of the corners. People walked around it, wondering at it, saying, ‘Will you not place that brick?’ I am that brick, and I am the Seal of the Prophets” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 18].

However, it is not the physical structure of the *Ka‘bah*, no matter how blessed it is, that really counts, but the inward mercies and blessings that alight on it every instant to radiate to the people around it. For the Prophet ﷺ said, “There descends upon this House one hundred and twenty mercies every instant, sixty for those who are circumambulating, forty for those who are praying, and twenty for those who are looking at it” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, 3:292]. He also said that he who circumambulates the house does not raise one foot, nor put it down without ten good deeds being recorded for him, ten of his sins being erased, and he is raised ten degrees” [Aḥmad, 2:3].

## The Black Stone

The Black Stone was brought from Paradise by Jibrīl ʾ for Ibrāhīm ʾ to place in the eastern corner of the *Ka‘bah*. The Prophet ﷺ kissed the Black Stone,

placed both hands on it, then rubbed his face with them [Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:212]. He said, “The Corner and the Station are two of the rubies of Paradise, the light of which God has hidden, for had God not hidden their lights, they would have shone from the East to the West” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 49]. And he ﷺ said, “The Black Stone is a white ruby of the rubies of Paradise which was only blackened by the sins of the pagans. On the Day of Arising, God will raise it as big as Uḥud, testifying for those who touched and kissed it” [Ibn Khuzayma, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:220]; and “The Black Stone came down from Paradise as white as snow; it was blackened by the sins of the children of Ādam” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 49; Aḥmad, 1:329].

A Makkan scholar who saw the Black Stone in its entirety during the rebuilding of the *Kaʿbah* during the reign of Sultan Murād (1040 A.H.) stated that all the hidden portion of it was white. What can be seen now of the Stone are eight small black fragments, embedded in a matrix fixed into a surrounding silver shell. This is because the Black Stone was stolen from the *Kaʿbah* in the year 316 A.H., and taken from Makkah by a sect of disbelievers called the Qarāmitah, only to be recovered in pieces years later and finally replaced in its present form.

The Black Stone has many special attributes, for it is, together with the Yemenī Corner, on the exact foundations of Ibrāhīm, and we are commanded to touch and kiss it. It is the point where circumambulation begins and ends. He who places his hand on it is as if he has taken the Hand of the All-Merciful [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 32]. It has a light of its own that God has hidden, and it will testify for everyone who touches and kisses it.

## The Yemenī Corner

The Yemenī corner is the southern corner of the *Kaʿbah*, which is the last corner. Those who circumambulate pass by before reaching the corner of the Black Stone. The Prophet ﷺ never passed by it without placing his hand on it [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 59, 80; Abū Dāwūd, *Manāsik*, 47]. Thus, to touch the Yemenī Corner at each round is a definite *sunnah*. To kiss it is not so definite a *sunnah*. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī says that some scholars recommend it [*Fatḥ al-Bārī*,

Vol.3, 475]. However, other scholars have disagreed. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه used to place his hand on the Yemenī Corner and Black Stone with each round, but not on the other two corners. He said about this, “I think the Messenger of God ﷺ did not place his hand on them because they do not stand on the [original] foundations of the House” [Abū Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, *Bāb Istilām al-Arkān*, 1875]. Other Companions, such as ibn al-Zubayr, touched all four corners.

Touching the two Corners erases sins, for the Prophet ﷺ said, “Rubbing the Stone and the Yemenī Corner puts down sins with force” [Aḥmad, 2:3; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, 12:392]; and “To touch them is an expiation of sins” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Hajj*, 111].

## ***Al-Multazam***

This is the area of the wall of the *Ka‘bah* between the Black Stone and the door. The Prophet ﷺ pressed his face, chest, arms, and hands against it [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 35]. It is one of the places where supplication is more likely to be accepted and answered.

## ***Hijr Ismā‘īl***

This is the semi circular enclosure to the north of the *Ka‘bah*, beneath the Spout of Mercy, which drains the *Ka‘bah*’s roof. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said, “As I desired to enter into the House and pray there, the Messenger of God ﷺ took my hand and led me into the *Hijr*, saying, ‘Pray here when you desire to enter the House, for it is but part of the House’” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Hajj*, 48].

The *Hijr* is the part of the original area of the *Ka‘bah* left out by Quraysh when they rebuilt the House. When one stands in it, one is actually within the confines of the *Ka‘bah*. It is recommended to pray there and make *du‘ā’*.

## The Station of Ibrāhīm

### (*Maqām Ibrāhīm*)

“When We appointed the House a place of assembly for mankind and a place of safety, saying: ‘Adopt the station of Ibrāhīm as a place of ritual prayer’” [2:125].

The stone on which Ibrāhīm ﷺ stood to build the House was a miraculous stone from Paradise. As the walls of the *Ka‘bah* grew higher, it rose to allow Ibrāhīm ﷺ to continue the work. It also became soft under his blessed feet so that it received their imprint. It can now be seen under glass cover on the eastern side of the House.

The Prophet ﷺ prayed the two *rak‘as* which constitute the *sunnah* of circumambulation (*sunnat al-ṭawāf*) behind it, so that it stood between him and the *Ka‘bah*. It is therefore recommended to pray one’s two *rak‘as* after *ṭawāf* there. However, during the pilgrimage season, the area becomes extremely crowded, and one should not insist on praying directly behind the *Maqām* but should pray anywhere in the area behind it, so as to avoid causing difficulties to those in circumambulation. In fact, the two *rak‘as* may very well be prayed anywhere at all within the Mosque.

During ‘Umar’s caliphate, in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of the *Hijrah*, Makkah was flooded, and the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* was carried by the waters far to the southern outskirts of the city. Upon receiving news of this, ‘Umar rushed to Makkah, performed his *‘umrah*, then replaced the *Maqām* at exactly the same location in which it had been. He also demolished some of the houses around the Sacred Mosque, enlarged it, and constructed a wall around it.

## Zamzam

Before the time of the Prophet’s birth ﷺ the well of Zamzam had been obliterated, its location forgotten. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet’s grandfather, saw succeeding dream-visions where he was told, “Dig Zamzam!” and was shown its

location. He dug where he was told and found the well which, since that time till now, suffices the pilgrims of every season however many they may be.

There are many special attributes to Zamzam. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The water of Zamzam is for whatever it is drunk for” [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 78]. The meaning being that whatever intentions one has in drinking Zamzam, whether outward or inward, God fulfills them. He also said, “Zamzam is blessed; it is food that satiates and a cure for illness” [Aḥmad, 5:175, Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 3:286]. And he said, “The difference between us and hypocrites is that they do not fill themselves up with Zamzam [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 78].

## Historical Sites in the City of Makkah

### 1. Birthplace of the Prophet ﷺ

The site of the Prophet’s birth ﷺ which used to be the house of his father, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, is now a public library standing in the plaza at the foot of Mount Abū Qubays, outside the walls of the Sacred Mosque on its eastern side.

### 2. Mosque of the Banner, *Masjid al-Rāyah*

This mosque marks the place where the Prophet’s banner was erected on the day of the conquest of Makkah. It stands along the road that leads from Marwa to al-Maʿlā Cemetery.

### 3. The Maʿlā Cemetery

This is the main cemetery of Makkah. The Makkans still bury their dead there. It now consists of two enclosures connected by a tunnel. At the very end of the second enclosure at the foot of a hill lies the Lady Khadija رضي الله عنها the first wife of the Prophet ﷺ. All the Companions and Followers who died in Makkah were buried there, and so were countless scholars and men of God.

“An excellent cemetery is this,” said the Prophet ﷺ referring to al-Maʿlā [Aḥmad, 1:367; Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 3:297]. And there are many *ḥadīths*

to the effect that he who dies in or between the Two Sanctuaries is resurrected in safety and not subjected to judgment [Abū Ya‘lā, ibn ‘Adiy, Abū Nu‘aym, al-Bayhaqī, ibn Ishāq, ibn Manda, al-Ḥākim, al-Ṭabarānī].

Those who are buried in Makkah will be resurrected after the Prophet ﷺ and the people of Madīnah and will join them to be mustered in their company [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 18].

#### 4. Well of Dhū Ṭuwā

This is an old well in the Jarwal area, in front of the maternity hospital. The Prophet ﷺ used to stop there before entering Makkah. There he performed his *ghusl* and spent the night. He prayed on a small mound near the well [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Hajj*, 29, 38]. The present-day mosque there is not built on the exact location where he prayed.

The area of Dhū Ṭuwā was also where Quraysh used to muster their forces before setting out on military expeditions, one such expedition being the one which led them to the Battle of Badr.

#### 5. Mosque of the Jinn, *Masjid al-Jinn*

The newly rebuilt *Masjid al-Jinn* stands near the Ma‘lā cemetery to the north of the Sacred Mosque. This is one of two places in Makkah mentioned in the *sīrah* accounts of the life of the Prophet ﷺ where the Prophet ﷺ met with *jinn*. The other occasion took place at the foot of Mount Ḥirā’. The third, and perhaps most famous, was outside Makkah, in the Valley of Nakhlah, on the Prophet’s return from Ṭā’if.

‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ recounted how the Prophet ﷺ once prayed ‘*ishā*’ in Makkah, then, taking him by the hand, walked with him to the sandy valley north of the Sacred Mosque called al-Baṭḥā’, which is the area from the *Ḥaram* to where the valley bends towards Mina. The Prophet ﷺ told him to sit down, then drew a line before him in the sand, saying, “Cross not your line, for men will come your way; do not speak to them; they will not speak to you.” Then the Prophet ﷺ walked out of sight.



Ibn Mas‘ūd says,” As I was sitting within my line, men came toward me, looking like Zott people [a race of dark skinned people from India] in their hair and bodies; I did not see their private parts, neither did I see any clothes. They kept passing by me without crossing the line, then proceeding toward the Messenger of God ﷺ until the night neared its end. Then the Messenger of God ﷺ came as I was sitting, said that they had tired him out, crossed my line, put his head on my thigh, and went to sleep...” [Al-Tirmidhī, 5:145; Dārimī, 1:19].

## 6. *Mīqāt* of the People of Makkah and other Pilgrims in the City

According to Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, he who wishes to perform an ‘*umrah* from Makkah should enter into *ihrām* from one of three places (*mīqāts*) around it. The most preferable is Ji‘rānah, since it is the place where the Prophet ﷺ started his ‘*umrah*, on his return from the Ṭā‘if expedition. Second after Ji‘rānah comes Tan‘īm, for it is from there that the Prophet ﷺ bid ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ start her ‘*umrah*. Third comes Ḥudaybiyah, for this is where the Prophet ﷺ wished to enter Makkah from for the ‘*umrah* he had intended before the conquest.

- a. **Al-Ji‘rānah** – This is a well twenty-four kilometers to the northeast of Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ spent fifteen days there in the ninth year of the *Hijrah*, and there he divided the spoils of the victory of Ḥunayn [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 92].
- b. **Al-Tan‘īm** – This is the nearest *mīqāt* to the Sacred Mosque, located six kilometers from it on the Madinah road. There the Prophet ﷺ bid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, son of Abū Bakr, to accompany his sister, ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ, to perform her ‘*umrah* [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 145]. This is why the mosque that was eventually built there was called ‘Ā’ishah’s Mosque. Today it is the easiest of access of the three *mīqāts* for those who wish to perform ‘*umrah* from within Makkah.
- c. **Al-Ḥudaybiyah** – Today known as al-Shumaysī, Ḥudaybiyah is located on the old Makkah-Jeddah road, twenty-two kilometers west of Makkah. The ruins of the old mosque, behind the new one, are said to stand at the location of the tree

beneath which the Prophet ﷺ received the oath of allegiance from his Companions. “*God was well pleased with the believers who swore allegiance to you under the tree; He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down the peace upon them and rewarded them with a near victory*” [48:18].

The Prophet ﷺ had left Madīnah, having entered into *iḥrām* at Dhu al-Ḥulayfah, the *mīqāt* of Madīnah, intending to perform *‘umrah*. All had assumed that the Quraysh, being the keepers of the House, would not dare prevent pilgrims access to it, even if they were their enemies. However, still smarting from their previous defeats at the hands of the Muslims, the Quraysh went against accepted practice and refused to let the Muslims perform their *‘umrah*. The Muslims stopped at Ḥudaybiyah. Much deliberation ensued; then the Prophet ﷺ upon hearing a rumour that ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, whom he had sent as emissary to Makkah, had been killed, sat under the tree and called the Companions to renew their allegiance. They all pledged themselves to fight with him and not retreat, except one hypocrite who hid behind his camel. The Companions who pledged their allegiance to God and His Prophet ﷺ on that day were promised the Garden and, of all the Companions, are considered next in merit only to those who fought at Badr.

## Places Related to the Rites of Ḥajj

### 1. Namirah

On his Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet ﷺ prayed the dawn prayer, *fajr*, in Minā, waited for a short while, then rode towards the valley of ‘Arafāt. He ordered that his tent be pitched at Namirah, a small hill located on the rim of the Valley of ‘Uranah, just outside ‘Arafāt. There, he remained until the sun passed its zenith. Then he asked for his she-camel, Qaṣwā’, to be saddled, rode to the foot of the Mount of Mercy (*Jabal al-Raḥmah*) in ‘Arafāt, stood near certain boulders that long afterward remained known to the Muslims, and delivered his well-known sermon [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 147; Abū Dāwūd, *Manāsik*, 56, ibn Mājah, *Manāsik*, 84].

The Namirah Mosque, built on the site of the Prophet's tent, which is also called the Mosque of Ibrāhīm, stands mostly outside of ʿArafāt proper. Pilgrims must therefore be careful to cross the demarcation line into ʿArafāt on the Day of ʿArafāt; otherwise they will remain in Wādī ʿUranah, and not fulfill the main requirement of *hajj*, which is to stand on the plain of ʿArafāt itself.

## 2. ʿArafāt

ʿArafāt is a roughly circular plain of about six square kilometers, surrounded on three sides by a range of low hills. *Jabal al-Raḥmah*, the Mount of Mercy, is a small hill standing in its southeastern part.

Contrary to what many pilgrims seem to think, it is not a *sunnah* to stand on the mount, for the Prophet ﷺ never did, nor did he recommend it. He stood at the foot of the hill, where *Masjid al-Ṣukhayrāt*, the Mosque of the Small Boulders, used to stand, and he ﷺ said, “I have stood here, but the whole of ʿArafāt is a standing place” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Hajj*, 149; Abū Dāwūd, *Manāsik*, 56; Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Hajj*, 54].

ʿArafāt is located outside the boundaries of the Sanctuary of Makkah. It becomes sacred on that one day of each year in *hajj*, when God opens the floodgates of His mercy for the pilgrims, and for their sake, for the rest of the *ummah* as well.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “On no day does God release slaves from the Fire more than on the Day of ʿArafat. He draws near, August and Majestic is He, and speaks proudly of them to the angels, asking, ‘What is it that they desire?’” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Dhikr*, 40; Ibn Majah, *Manāsik*, 56].

He ﷺ also said, “The best of *duʿāʾ* is the *duʿāʾ* of the Day of ʿArafat, and the best that I and the Prophets before me have said is *Lā ilāha illa ʾllāhu lā sharīka lahu, lahuʾl-mulku wa lahuʾl-ḥamdu, wa huwa ʿalā kulli shayʾin qadīr*. [There is no deity other than God, no partners with Him; to Him is the dominion and to Him is the praise, and He has power over all things.]” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Daʿawāt*, 123].

Sometimes the Prophet ﷺ pronounced the word ‘Arafāt, with the “t” sound at the end, and sometimes as “‘Arafah” without the “t”. The word ‘*Arafah* means “to know.”

It is extremely reprehensible for a pilgrim to leave ‘Arafāt at the end of the Day of Standing on ‘Arafāt thinking that God may not have forgiven him—for this is the height of bad opinion from the slave for his Lord, when his Lord has promised His forgiveness for those who attend.

From ‘Arafāt, after sunset, pilgrims move to Muzdalifah.

### 3. Muzdalifah

The word *Muzdalifah* is derived from the root *za-la-fa*, which means “to draw nearer.” It is a valley a little more than four kilometers long, located between ‘Arafāt and Minā, where pilgrims spend the night of the ‘*Id*. It must be remembered that the night of the ‘*Id* precedes the day of the ‘*Id*, as the Islamic day begins at sunset. The pilgrims postpone the sunset prayer, *maghrib*, till they reach Muzdalifah where they join *maghrib* and the night prayer, ‘*ishā*’, together—as the Prophet ﷺ did on his pilgrimage [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 93].

God says in the Qur’ān, “*When you press on from ‘Arafāt, remember God at the Sacred Monument, and remember Him as He has guided you, though before you were of those gone astray*” [2:190].

The Sacred Monument, *al-Mash‘ar al-Ḥarām*, is where the Prophet ﷺ spent the night in Muzdalifah and made *du‘ā*’.

The night of Muzdalifah should be a night of remembering God, thanking Him, praising Him for His immense graces, and imploring Him to complete His favour upon the pilgrims and all Muslims by protecting them in this world and admitting them to the Garden in the next. It is not a night for idle chatter or trivial pursuits.

Pilgrims do not pray the ‘*Id* prayer. They pray the dawn prayer, *fajr*, in Muzdalifah, then cross Wādī Muḥassir to enter Minā. Those whose company includes women or weak people need not wait till *fajr*, but may move after midnight,

following the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ who sent his women ahead to Minā with an escort in the middle of the night so as to miss the rush.

#### 4. *Wādī Muḥassir*

This is the narrow valley separating Muzdalifah from Minā. It is the location where Abraha, the Abyssinian, and his army with its elephant were destroyed in the year of the Prophet's birth ﷺ. “*Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the elephant? Did He not foil their scheming? And send against them flocks of birds, which pelted them with stones of baked clay, and made them like plants cropped by cattle?*” [105:1–5]. Because this is a place where the punishment of God descended, it is recommended to cross it quickly, as is the case with all such places.

#### 5. *Minā*

Minā is one of the most important valleys in the area. The pilgrims, following the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, spend the night there before setting out for ʿArafāt. There they also spend at least three of the four days of the Feast of the Sacrifice, ʿĪd al-Adḥā, the days directly following the Day of ʿArafāt. This is obligatory, except according to the school of jurisprudence of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, that considers it a *sunnah*.

There the Prophet ﷺ called the people to Islam in pre-Islamic days, during the pilgrimage. There he met a group of people from Yathrib, which led to their first and second oaths of allegiance. These oaths took place where the *Masjid al-Bayʿah* now stands.

The rites performed by the pilgrims in Minā are to stone the *Jamrāt*, which are symbolic representations of the devil; sacrifice their animals, reenacting Ibrahim's sacrifice of the ram in place of his son, Ismāʿīl ʷ; shave or cut their hair; and spend the nights in the valley.

The *Jamrāt* are three columns made of stones near the northern end of the valley, which stand in a line. The one nearest to Makkah is called *Jamrat al-ʿAqabah*; the next one, 156 metres to the South of it, is *al-Jamrat al-Wuṣṭā*, the Middle *Jamrah*; and the

one 117 metres to the South of that, nearest to al-Khayf Mosque, *Masjid al-Khayf*, is *al-Jamrat al-Ṣuġhrā*, the Smallest *Jamrah*.

On ʿĪd day, pilgrims stone only one of the three, *Jamrat al-ʿAqaba*, with seven pebbles. Then, on the next two or three days, all three *Jamrat* are stoned, from the smallest to the largest, in that order, each with seven pebbles.

The *Jamrāt* mark the places where Ibrāhīm ﷺ was met by the devil, Iblīs, who, on three occasions, tried to deter him from carrying out the divine order he had received by dream to sacrifice his firstborn, Ismāʿīl ﷺ. On each of these three occasions, Ibrāhīm stoned the devil, first at the site of *Jamrat al-ʿAqabah*, then at the sites of the other two *Jamrāt*, thereby defeating his attempt at subversion.

The ram sent down by God to be sacrificed instead of Ismāʿīl was said to have been sacrificed in this area also, at the foot of the hill, where there used to be a small mosque called the Mosque of the Ram, *Masjid al-Kabsh*.

The stoning of the *Jamrāt* commemorates these events, but also each pilgrim's personal, lifelong battle with the devil. As with all the rites of pilgrimage, it is performed primarily to show total obedience to divine injunctions—whether one understands the wisdom of the injunctions or not. This surrender to the divine will is a profound way of remembering God. This is why the Prophet ﷺ said, “Stoning the pillars, circumambulation, and hurrying between Ṣafā and Marwa were made for the remembrance of God, not for anything else” [Al-Ḥākim].

*Masjid al-Khayf* is an important landmark in Minā to the south of the *Jamarāt* toward Muzdalifah. This mosque is the spot where the Prophet ﷺ pitched his tent on this portion of his pilgrimage. “In *Masjid al-Khayf*,” he said, “are the graves of seventy Prophets” [al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 3:297]. He also said, “Seventy prophets have prayed in *Masjid al-Khayf*; among them was Moses ﷺ. It is as if I see him wearing two white cloths with short fringes for *iḥrām*, on a camel from [the Yemeni tribe of] Shanūʿah, with a bridle having two braids” [Al-Bazzār, al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 3:221, 3:297].

One of the special attributes of Minā, of which there are many, is that it is like a womb; when it is full, it enlarges [Al-Ṭabarānī, *Awsaṭ*, 7:378; Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawaʿid*, 3:265].

## Mosque of the Pledge

### *Masjid al-Bayʿah*

This is an old mosque that lies at the foot of the hill on the eastern side of the valley of Minā, not far from *Jamrat al-ʿAqabah*. It marks the location where the Prophet ﷺ received the oath of allegiance of the tribes of Yathrib—the city which after the Prophet’s emigration to it would forever be known as Madinah. The oaths took place on two consecutive years, and are thus called the first and second *Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah*.

These events that led to the emigration began years before the *Hijrah*, when the Prophet ﷺ had gone out to Minā during the days of pilgrimage to invite the people to Islam. There he met and spoke with a group of the tribe of Khazraj who had come from Yathrib. Jewish tribes also lived in Yathrib at that time and had long threatened both Khazraj and Aws, their pagan neighbours, with the coming of a prophet whose time, they said, was imminent. When he appeared, they would ride with him against the pagans, and bring slaughter to the two Arab tribes.

When the Khazraj heard the Prophet ﷺ inviting them to Islam, they told each other, “By God! This is the Prophet the Jews have been threatening you with; let them not reach him before you!” They said, “We have left our people in such a state that no people are more divided by enmity and evil than they. Hopefully God will unite them through you. We will go to them and invite them to your affair and tell them about that which we have accepted from you concerning this religion. Should God unite them in accepting it, no man will be mightier than you!” They returned to Yathrib and spread the news amongst its people so that on the next pilgrimage twelve of their men met the Prophet ﷺ near al-ʿAqabah and gave him their oath to accept *tawhīd*—the oneness of God, to refrain from theft, adultery, and

killing their children, and to obey him in doing good. As they were departing from Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ sent Muṣʿab ibn ʿUmayr ؓ with them to recite the Qurʾān to them and teach them their religion.

The next year, Muṣʿab ؓ returned to Makkah, and many new Muslims from Yathrib set out for the pilgrimage in the company of their pagan townsmen. This time, seventy-three Muslim men and women met with the Prophet ﷺ at al-ʿAqabah in the middle of the night and swore their allegiance to him, promising to defend him as they would defend their own families. The Prophet ﷺ appointed twelve *naqīb*, or chieftains, nine from Khazraj and three from Aws, who were to be the links between their people and him [Ibn Hishām, 1:431 to 434].

On that occasion, the Prophet’s uncle, ʿAbbās ؓ, not yet formally a Muslim, played a prominent role in impressing upon the Prophet’s future Helpers the supreme importance of their pledge to his beloved nephew’s protection. That is why the Abbasid caliphs, his descendants, built the mosque marking the location and commemorating the events that took place there with an inscription on the outside surface of the *qiblah* wall.

## The Cave of Ḥirā’ (*Ghār Ḥirā’*)

Mount Ḥirā’ lies to the southeast of Makkah, separated from Minā by Mount Thabīr. Near its top is the cave where the Prophet ﷺ spent a month each year in spiritual retreat, before the Archangel Jibril ؑ came to him with Revelation [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Bad’ al-Wahī*, 1].

An incident which happened on Ḥirā’ is narrated by Saʿīd ibn Zayd ؓ, and is one of at least three occasions when the hills upon which the Prophet ﷺ stood shook. Once was on Mount Ḥirā’, once on Mount Thabīr—also in Makkah—and once on Mount Uḥud in Madīnah. Speaking about the occasion on Ḥirā’, Saʿīd ؓ said, “We were with the Messenger of God ﷺ and his family at Ḥirā’. It shook, and the Messenger of God ﷺ and his family, said, ‘Be still Ḥirā’! There is none upon you but a Prophet, a *ṣiddīq*, and a martyr!’” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 27; ibn Mājah, *Muqaddima*, 11].



There on that same hill, on the Night of Destiny, *Laylat al-Qadr*, in the month of Ramaḍān, in the fortieth year of his life, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ began to receive the final divine revelation vouchsafed to man. The Archangel Jibril ﷺ appeared and held him tightly, commanding, “Recite!”

The Prophet ﷺ answered, “I am no reciter!”

He squeezed him a second time, commanding, “Recite!”

The Prophet ﷺ answered, “I am no reciter!”

The angel held him a third time, squeezing him to the limit of human endurance, then released him, saying: “*Recite in the Name of your Lord Who has created, Who has created man from a dot. Recite and your Lord is the Most Generous; He has taught by the pen, taught man that which he did not know*” [96:1–5]. The first of the Qur’ān was thus revealed to the Prophet ﷺ [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Bad’ al-Wahī*, 1; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 252].

## The Cave of Thawr (*Ghār Thawr*)

*Jabal Thawr* or Mount Thawr lies to the South of Makkah, near today’s southern portion of the Makkah ring road. It is almost twice as high as Ḥirā’ and, near its summit, the cave still exists where the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ᓖ hid, when they left Makkah to emigrate to Madīnah.

The pagans followed their tracks up the hill until they came to the mouth of the cave. Abū Bakr ᓖ was worried for the safety of the Prophet ﷺ. He said, “O Messenger of God, should one of them look at his feet he will see us beneath his feet.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Abū Bakr! What do you reckon of two with whom the third is God?” This is the event referred to in the Qur’ān where God, Exalted is He, says, “*If you do not support him, [know that] it was God Who helped him before when the disbelievers expelled him. When the two were in the cave, he said to his companion, ‘Do not despair, for God is with us!’ Then God caused His peace to descend upon him and supported him with invisible forces and made the word of the disbelievers the lower and the word of God the higher. And God is August, Wise*” [9:40] [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, 2].

The pagans then saw a spider web on the mouth of the cave [Aḥmad, 1:348], and two pigeons standing there [Al-Bazzār, Ibn Saʿd], and thought it impossible that anyone could have entered the cave and left them undisturbed. Thus they left the Prophet's hiding place in search of him elsewhere.

The Prophet ﷺ and his companion remained in the cave for three days before setting out for Madīnah.

**Madīnah**



Visiting Madīnah is one of the most fulfilling experiences for a Muslim, for to visit the Prophet ﷺ, pray in his *Rawḍah*, see the places where he and his companions prayed, sat, conversed, gave judgment, or fought, is an experience that no other experience equals. It fills the heart with serenity and contentment.

To love the Prophet ﷺ is the condition without which there can be no faith. He ﷺ said, “None of you shall be a believer unless I am dearer to him than his parent, his child, and all other people” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 8; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 69]. And he ﷺ said, “Three things—he who has them will find the sweetness of faith: that God and His Messenger are dearer to him than all else, that when he loves a man he loves him only for God, and that he hates to revert to disbelief after God’s saving him from it as he would hate being thrown in the Fire” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 9,14; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 66,67].

If we consider the *ḥadīths* where the Prophet ﷺ mentions which places in Madīnah are parts of Paradise, we find that he spoke not only of the *rawḍah* in his mosque (*rawḍah* meaning meadow), but also of Mount Uḥud, the Valley of Boṭḥān, the Muṣallā (‘*Īd* prayer area), and many of the wells of Madīnah. Indeed, there are so many places mentioned that the conclusion imposes itself that the whole of the Prophet’s city is a piece of Paradise.

When thinking of Madīnah, we must also remember that every day innumerable angels enter it carrying the salutations of hundreds of millions of Muslims to their Prophet ﷺ for each Muslim prays on the Prophet ﷺ at the very least five times a day during obligatory prayers, and no Muslim worth that name will confine himself to merely that. Thus, Madīnah is constantly teeming full of the myriad angels who are entering and leaving, so that the visitor is surrounded by them wherever he is, in his lodgings, in the streets, in the shops, and so on. This is partly what makes the heart dilate in Madīnah and feel such happiness and serenity, the main reason of course being the light of the Prophet himself ﷺ.

Madīnah is a sanctuary, just as Makkah is, for the Prophet ﷺ said, “Abraham made Makkah a sanctuary and prayed for it. I have made Madīnah a sanctuary just as Abraham ؑ made Makkah a sanctuary, and I have prayed for its

*mudd* and *sāʿ* [measures of quantity] just as Abraham ﷺ prayed for Makkah” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 1; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 445].

He once pointed at Madīnah with his hand (for the Prophet never pointed a finger) saying, “It is a safe sanctuary” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 479].

The boundaries of the sanctuary of Madīnah were said by the Prophet ﷺ to be the small hill of Thawr—behind Mount Uḥud—to the North; Mount ‘Ayr to the South; and the two *ḥarras*, or lava tracts, to the East and the West, the western *harra* being traversed longitudinally by the ‘Aqīq Valley.

The merits of all that lies within these boundaries are tremendous.

He ﷺ said, “Faith retreats into Madīnah just as a snake retreats into its hole” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 6; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Imān*, 232]. Scholars have commented on this *ḥadīth* saying that the snake is known to retreat into its hole when threatened only to come out fighting.

And he ﷺ said, “O God! Make Madīnah as dear to us as Makkah, or even more so!” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 12; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 480]. And when they brought the earliest fruits of a crop to him, he said, “O God! Bless our fruits, bless our city, and bless our measures!” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 12; Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Daʾawat*, 53]. And he ﷺ said, “O God! Make the *barakah* [blessings] of Madīnah twice that of Makkah” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 10; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 466]. And he ﷺ said, “There will come a time upon the people when a man shall invite his cousin and his relative: ‘Come to abundance! Come to abundance!’ But Madīnah is better for them, if they but knew. By He in Whose Hand my soul is, none shall leave it, wishing to leave it, but that God will replace him by one better. Madīnah is like a furnace, it expels impurities. The Hour will not come before Madīnah expels its corrupt people, just as the furnace expels impurities from iron!” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 459]. And he ﷺ said, “He who can die in Madīnah, let him do so, for I shall intercede for those who die in it” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 67; ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manasik*, 104 ]. This means that those who have an opportunity to live in Madīnah until they die should do so, for, in addition to the Prophet’s general intercession for his community, the

people of Madīnah, by virtue of being his neighbours, deserve and receive the Prophet's additional attention ﷺ.

## Boundaries of the Sacred Territory

### *Uḥud, ‘Ayr, and Thawr*

Mount Uḥud is the long, reddish mountain to the north of Madīnah. It is unique in that the Prophet ﷺ, on numerous occasions, spoke of a special relationship of love between him and it. “Uḥud is a mountain that loves us and that we love” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Maghazī*, 28; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 504]. “Uḥud is a mountain that loves us and that we love; it is on a gate of the gates of Paradise. ‘Ayr is on a gate of the gates of Hell” [Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 104]. He also said, “This is a mountain that loves us and that we love; it is on one of the gates of Paradise; and this is ‘Ayr, a mountain that detests us and that we detest; it is on one of the gates of the Fire” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, 3:14].

The best known time when a hill shook beneath the Prophet's feet ﷺ happened on Mount Uḥud, and was narrated by ‘Uthmān, who was there, and Anas ibn Mālīk and Sahl ibn Sa‘d ؓ, who heard it from those who were there. They all reported that the Prophet ﷺ climbed Mount Uḥud one day in the company of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān ؓ. The Mount shook beneath them [in ecstasy for the love of them, have many scholars said], and stamping upon it with his foot, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Be still, Uḥud, for there is none upon you but a Prophet, a *siddīq*, and two martyrs” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, 5; Muslim, *Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, 50].

It is interesting to note that the Prophet ﷺ designated ‘Ayr and Thawr as the southern and northern boundaries of the sanctuary of Madīnah, with the eastern and western boundaries being the two *ḥarra*, or lava tracts. Thawr is a small hill just north of Uḥud, behind Mount Uḥud from the city. This puts the whole of the paradisaical mountain, Uḥud, within the boundaries of Madīnah, while at the same time placing the whole of the infernal mountain, ‘Ayr, outside its bounds.

## The Prophet's Mosque ﷺ

Though the Prophet ﷺ first arrived at Qubā', he was not to stay there, and after staying long enough to build the Qubā' Mosque with his Companions, he ﷺ moved on toward central Madīnah. Riding his she-camel, Qaswā', he informed all who tried to direct her that she was being moved by God, and to let her be. Finally she came to a halt and knelt on the site of the Mosque, where the Prophet ﷺ dismounted, accepted Abū Ayyūb's hospitality, bought the piece of land from its two orphan owners, Sahl and Suhayl ؓ, and proceeded to build his Mosque [Ibn Hishām, 1:495 ].

It is most probable that the initial building was of palm trunks and branches, with the door uprights made of stone, and that it was rebuilt—but not enlarged—with mud bricks four years later. It was enlarged once in the Prophet's time ﷺ after the Khaybar expedition, then subsequently by 'Umar, then 'Uthmān ؓ, and then by other caliphs.

In the original Mosque, they prayed toward Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months until the *qiblah* was changed to Makkah.

There were three main doors in the Mosque, the eastern, the western, and the southern. The latter became northern after the *qiblah* was changed. Some of the Companions whose houses were adjacent to the Mosque had small openings through which they could enter the Mosque. Years later though, during the Prophet's final illness, he ordered all those openings shut except Abū Bakr's [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, 3].

The eastern door was called the Prophet's Door, since it was the door that led out of his apartments. It was also called 'Uthmān's Door, since it was through it that the Prophet ﷺ came out and crossed the alley to visit his daughter, Ruqayyah ؓ, at her husband 'Uthmān's house. After her death, 'Uthmān ؓ married her sister, Umm Kulthūm ؓ, who was also visited by her father in the same manner, until her death, also during her father's lifetime. After the Siege of the Trench, when the Prophet ﷺ returned home to wash and rest, Gabriel ؑ appeared



on his horse from the Banī Ghanm Alley, stood before this same door, and called upon the Prophet ﷺ not to put down his armour, for God wished him to march to the Banī Qurayzah. Ever since that time, the door has been known as Gabriel's Door, *Bāb Jibrīl*.

The western door is said to be the door through which a Bedouin once walked in, complaining to the Prophet ﷺ of the drought they were suffering. The Prophet ﷺ, who was delivering the Friday sermon, prayed for rain. A cloud appeared above Mount Sal', small as a shield, then grew bigger and bigger till it covered the sky, then lighting broke out and rain poured down, even before the Prophet ﷺ came down from his pulpit [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Istisqā'*, 6,7; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Istisqā'*, 8]. Since that incident, the door has been called the Door of Mercy, *Bāb al-Rahmah*, for rain is mercy.

At the back of the Mosque was the *ṣuffah* or shelter where the poor emigrants slept. Many of the more famous Companions lived there for various periods, including Bilāl, Abū Dharr, Salman, Ibn Mas'ūd, Suhayb, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān, Abū Hurayrah, and others ﷺ. There were usually around seventy men there at any one time, devoting themselves to keeping the company of the Prophet ﷺ and learning from him. He often sent them on expeditions during the course of which many were martyred. They led a hard life, preferring the company of the Prophet ﷺ to earning a living, knowing that what they would receive from him during his lifetime was irreplaceable and worth all conceivable sacrifices. One of them, Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa' ﷺ recounts one incident that had taken place when he was one of the *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*. They had been hungry and had delegated him to go to the Prophet ﷺ and inform him about it. This he did, and the Prophet ﷺ turned to 'Ā'ishah and asked, "Do you have anything?"

She replied, "O Messenger of God, I have nothing but a few crumbs of bread."

"Bring them!" he said. He emptied the crumbs into a plate and went on arranging them with his hand while they increased until the plate was full. "O Wāthilah!" he said, "Go and fetch ten of my Companions, you being the tenth!" Wāthila called his companions. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Sit and eat in the Name of

God. Take from the edges and do not take from the top, for *barakah* descends on the top!" They ate to satiety, then rose leaving the plate as full as when they sat down. The Prophet ﷺ kept on handling the food, then said, "O Wāthilah, go and fetch another ten of your companions!" After these ten ate to satiety the whole sequence was repeated once more, after which the Prophet ﷺ asked, "Anyone left?"

"Yes, ten more," replied Wāthilah.

"Go fetch them!" he said. When these were finished, the plate was still as full as at the beginning, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Wāthilah, take this to 'Ā'ishah!" [Al-Haytamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, 8:305].

## **The *Rawḍah***

The Prophet ﷺ designated part of his mosque as being one of the meadows of Paradise, saying that it is the part between his house and his pulpit, or *minbar*. "What is between my house and my pulpit is a meadow of the meadows of Paradise, and my pulpit is on my Pool" [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Fadl al-Ṣalāh fī Maṣjid Makkah wa al-Madīnah*, 5; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 502].

Scholars have disagreed on the boundaries of the *rawḍah*, as this is not the only *ḥadīth* in which it is mentioned. Some have taken two other *ḥadīths* as evidence that it was the area between 'Ā'ishah's house and the pulpit: "That which lies between my grave and my pulpit is a meadow of the meadows of Paradise" [Aḥmad, 3:64; Tabarānī, *al-Awsat*, 1:360, 1:412; Bazzār, *Kaṣṣf al-Astar*, 2:56], the point here, of course, being that the Prophet ﷺ was buried in the house of 'Ā'ishah. The other *ḥadīth* is, "My pulpit is on a gate of the gates of Paradise. What lies between the pulpit and 'Ā'ishah's house is a meadow of the meadows of Paradise" [Al-Haytamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, 4:9].

Other scholars have argued that the *rawḍah* is larger, using another *ḥadīth* as evidence: "What lies between these houses [meaning his houses] and my pulpit is a meadow of the meadows of Paradise, and the pulpit is on a gate of the gates of Paradise" [Aḥmad, 4:40,41].

Still others have quoted another *ḥadīth* where the Prophet ﷺ said, “What lies between my house and my *Muṣallā* is a meadow of the meadows of Paradise” [Tabarānī, *al-Kabir*, 1:110; Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 4:9, ibn Shabbah, 1:138]. This *ḥadīth* extends the *rawḍah* all the way from the Prophet’s tomb to the *Muṣallā* area, which was outside of the built-up area of Madīnah, where the Muslims used to do their ‘*Id* prayers. If one examines all the *ḥadīths* together, it seems the Prophet ﷺ is describing the same meadow of Paradise, which extends throughout all of the areas described, whether he mentioned a smaller or larger part of it at any particular time. This manner of understanding the *ḥadīths* was corroborated by famous Companions, one of whom was Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās ؓ, who built his house west of the Mosque, within the area described by this last *ḥadīth*, so as to get the blessings of living within the *rawḍah*. Āʾishah ؓ along with all of the Companions, approved of his doing so for that very reason.

## The Prophet’s Pulpit ؓ or *Minbar*

The Prophet’s pulpit was made of the wood of al-Ghābah, an area extending west of Mount Uḥud. There is some disagreement on who made it, but total agreement on the fact that the Prophet ﷺ used to deliver his speeches leaning on a palm trunk that whimpered in pain when he left it for the pulpit. It whimpered so much that he ﷺ had to put his hand on it—or in another version, embrace it—to make it quiet down [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Jumuʿah*, 26]. The pulpit was made with three steps and had two pommels, one on each front corner of the top step, on which the Prophet ﷺ rested his hands. Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam increased the steps to six during the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah. In 654 A.H., a fire burned down much of the Prophet’s Mosque and the pulpit with it.

The current pulpit now stands in the same place where the original stood. The original wooden pulpit of the Prophet ﷺ had a pommel on which the Prophet ﷺ often rested his hand as he spoke. After the Prophet’s death, Abū Hurayrah ؓ used to stand beside the pulpit and place his hand on the pommel, before the *khalīfah* came out to deliver the Friday *khuṭbah*. Thus standing, he would

recite a few of the *ḥadīths* he had received from the Prophet ﷺ [Al-Ḥākim, 1:190], for Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه had received from the Prophet ﷺ the *ḥadīths* together with the gift of retention. Thus does he recount how this came to be: “I said, ‘O Messenger of God, I often hear you speak but I forget!’ He said, ‘Spread out your garment!’ I spread it out, he [made as if he] scooped [something] with his hand and poured it in it; then he said, ‘fold it up!’ I did and thereafter forgot nothing he ever said” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 38]. As for the other Companions, they used to wait until those in the mosque became few, then rise to the pommel, rub it, then make *du‘ā’*. So did the Followers and those who came after them [Ibn Abī Shaybah, 3:450]. Upon learning of this, ‘Abd Allāh, son of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, asked his father what he thought of this and of touching the Prophet’s chamber. The Imām answered that he saw nothing wrong there. And the famous compiler of *ḥadīth*, Imām ibn ‘Asākir, who witnessed the fire that burned part of the Prophet’s mosque, said, “The remaining parts of the pulpit of the Prophet ﷺ were burnt. Now visitors can no longer touch the pulpit’s pommel, on which the Prophet ﷺ placed his noble hand, nor the place where he used to sit, nor the place of his noble feet, for their great *barakah*” [Samhudī, *Khulaṣat al-Wafa*, 210, 211].

Another incident was also related by Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. He said, “One night I missed supper with the Prophet ﷺ and also missed being invited by one of our Companions. I prayed ‘*Ishā’*’ then tried to sleep but could not. Then I tried to pray, but could not. There was a man standing near the apartment of the Prophet ﷺ. I walked up to him, and it was the Prophet ﷺ praying. He prayed, then, leaning against the palm trunk he had been praying toward, said, ‘Who is this? Abū Hurayrah?’ I said, ‘Yes!’ He said, ‘You missed supper with us tonight?’ I said, ‘Yes!’ He said, ‘Go to the house and say: Bring the food you have!’ [I did and] they gave me a plate in which was a paste made with dates. I took it to the Prophet ﷺ and placed it before him. He said, ‘Call those in the mosque!’ I said to myself, ‘Woe to me, for I can see the food is so little, and woe to me from disobedience!’ I came to the men asleep and awakened them saying, ‘Respond!’ and I came to men praying and said, ‘Respond!’ until they all gathered near the Prophet ﷺ. He thrust his fingers

into it and pressed around the edge, then said, ‘Eat in the Name of God!’ They ate to satiety and I ate to satiety. Then he said, ‘Take it Abū Hurayrah and return it to the family of Muhammad, for there is no food with the family of Muhammad that one possessed of a liver [meaning a living being] can eat but this. It was offered to us by one of the Helpers.’ I took the plate and lifted it up, and it was as it had been when I had placed it there, except for the marks of the fingers of the Prophet ﷺ” [Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 8:307].

## Pillars of the *Rawḍah*

Before discussing the six pillars that have special significance in the *rawḍah*, it should be noted that the present pillars of the *rawḍah* stand on the exact places where the original palm-trunk pillars stood during the Prophet’s time. All who repaired, rebuilt, or extended the Prophet’s Mosque, from his time to the present, have been absolutely scrupulous in keeping the original places. A clear sign of this is the easily noticed irregularity of positioning of the *rawḍah* pillars in comparison with the exact regularity of all other pillars within the Prophet’s Mosque. These irregularities have been preserved from the Prophet’s time to this as an historical consideration.

The six pillars of special significance are marked by large green circles inscribed in gold. Three of the pillars are incorporated in the iron grill surrounding the Chamber; one is in the back of the *miḥrāb*, or prayer niche; and two stand in the front row of pillars, nearest the *miḥrāb* within the *rawḍah*.

That history has recorded special significance regarding these six pillars must not make us forget that all the pillars in the blessed Mosque have tremendous significance, since they were erected under the Prophet’s gaze and the Companions prayed there on innumerable occasions. Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه said, “I have watched the senior Companions of the Prophet ﷺ rush to the pillars at sunset [to pray] until the Prophet ﷺ came out” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, 95; Muslim, *Kitāb Salāt al-Musāfirīn*, 303].

## 1. Pillar of the Bed, *Ustuwānat al-Sarir*

This is the southernmost of the three pillars in the iron grill, the closest to the *qiblah*. The pillar is so named because this is where a mat made of palm fronds and a leather cushion filled with palm fibre used to be spread for the Prophet ﷺ during his retreat in the Mosque, or *i'tikāf*, in the last ten days of Ramaḍān.

## 2. Pillar of the Guard, *Ustuwānat al-Ḥaras*

The middle pillar in the iron grill is where some of the Companions, such as Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās and 'Alī ؓ, stood guard on those days when they feared they might be invaded.

'Ā'ishah ؓ, recounted how the Prophet ﷺ once returned tired from battle. He said, "I wish a man of virtue should come to guard me tonight." Soon afterwards, he heard the clanging of weapons outside his house. "Who is it?" he asked.

"Sa'd," came the reply, "I have come to guard you." So the Prophet slept [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, 70; Muslim, *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, 39,40].

When God, Exalted is He, revealed to His Prophet ﷺ, "*And God will protect you from people...*" [5:67], he told his Companions that he no longer needed guards.

## 3. Pillar of the Delegations, *Ustuwānat al-Wufūd*

This is the northernmost pillar of the three, and the farthest from *qiblah*. Between it and the Pillar of the Guard is a door that roughly corresponds to the door the Prophet ﷺ used to enter the mosque from and the narrow passageway that separated the houses of 'Ā'ishah and Fāṭimah ؓ. He ﷺ sat in this place, leaning against the pillar when it was only a palm trunk to receive the numerous delegations that came from the eighth year of *Hijrah* onward. There they accepted Islam and swore their allegiance to him.

## 4. Perfumed Pillar, *Al-Ustuwānat al-Mukhallaqah*

This is the thick pillar at the back of the *miḥrāb*. The reason it is so named is because when the caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd's mother, al-Khayzurān, came for

pilgrimage in 170 A.H., she perfumed all the pillars, but more so this one, as well as ‘Ā’isha’s, and the pillar west of the *miḥrāb*. All three of these pillars were sometimes called “perfumed,” but eventually the title adhered to only this one. The special merit of this pillar is that the Prophet ﷺ stood there to lead the prayers for some time before settling on the location where the *miḥrāb* now stands, not far from it [Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-Wafā’*, 2:439].

According to one version, the palm trunk that wept when the Prophet ﷺ left it for the *minbar* was buried under this pillar. There are though, many different unverifiable versions of where the palm trunk ended up.

## 5. Pillar of Repentance, or Pillar of Abū Lubābah, *Ustuwānat al-Tawbah*

This is the pillar next to the Pillar of the Bed, in the first row of pillars of the *rawḍah*. The colour of the marble used on this first row is different from the rest of the *rawḍah*’s pillars, because it corresponds to the narrowest definition of the *rawḍah*’s area—from ‘Ā’ishah’s house to the *minbar*. The pillar is called the Pillar of Repentance because it is the pillar to which the well-known Companion, Abū Lubābah رضي الله عنه, tied himself when he thought that he had betrayed God and His Prophet ﷺ during the siege of Banī Qurayẓah.

When the Jews of Banī Qurayẓah were besieged for twenty-five days after betraying the Muslims in war, they became convinced there was no way out for them. They sent a message to the Prophet ﷺ asking him to send Abū Lubābah ibn ‘Abdal-Mundhir رضي الله عنه to them that they might consult with him about their situation, for he had been their ally before Islam. When he came to them, they rushed to him, their women and children weeping in distress, so that he felt sorry for them. They asked him, “O Abū Lubābah! Should we accept Muhammad’s judgement?” He answered, “Yes!” but ran his finger across his throat, indicating execution. Later on he رضي الله عنه said “My legs had not moved from their place before I knew that I had betrayed God and His Messenger ﷺ.” He rushed to the Mosque and tied himself up to the pillar, saying, “I shall not leave my place before God forgives me what I have

done!” When news of what he had done reached the Prophet ﷺ he said, “Had he come to me, I would have asked forgiveness for him, but having done what he has, I am not one to release him before God forgives him!”

Abū Lubābah ؓ remained tied to the pillar a number of days. They would untie him for ritual purification and prayers, then tie him up again. This continued till in the middle of one night: the Prophet ﷺ was in Umm Salamah’s house, and she saw him smile. She inquired as to why and he told her, “God has forgiven Abū Lubābah!”

“Shall I give him the good news?” she asked.

“If you wish,” he replied. She walked to the door of the house and called, “Receive the good news, O Abū Lubābah! God has forgiven you!” The Companions keeping night vigil in the Mosque at that time rose to congratulate and untie him, but Abū Lubābah ؓ said, “Leave me until the Messenger of God ﷺ unties me with his own hand!” They left him, and he was untied according to his wish when the Prophet ﷺ came out for the *fajr* prayer [Ibn Hishām, 3:267,268; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, 4:15-17].

## 6. ‘Ā’ishah’s Pillar, *Ustuwanat* ‘Ā’ishah

At first, known as the Pillar of the Emigrants, since this is where the first Emigrants usually sat, it is also where the Prophet ﷺ led the prayer from for less than three weeks, after the *qiblah* was changed toward Makkah. He then moved forward to lead the prayer from the location of the Perfumed Pillar, then to the position of today’s *mihṛāb*, from where he led the prayer thereafter.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ said, “In the Mosque there is a spot, near this pillar; if people were to know about it, they would have to draw lots to be able to pray there.” They asked her, “O Mother of the Believers, where is it?” She gave them no answer. When they left, her nephew, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr ؓ, stayed behind to ask about it. He came out from his aunt’s house and walked straight to this pillar, under the watchful eyes of his companions. They realized she had told him the place; the pillar was recognized, and people have been praying there ever since. It is also



recorded that Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and Zubayr ﷺ used to pray there regularly, which means they all knew of its importance [Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 4:9,10; Tabarānī, *Awsaṭ*, 1:475,476].

## Houses that used to stand around the *Haram*

### 1. Abū Ayyūb's House

When the Prophet ﷺ first arrived to the Banī al-Najjār area in Yathrib, Abū Ayyūb ؓ, a man from the Banī al-Najjār, whose dwellings were in the proximity of the area where the Prophet ﷺ was to build his mosque, took the Prophet's luggage into his two storied house, then offered him hospitality. The Prophet ﷺ accepted, staying there about seven months, till the mosque and his apartments were completed. Abū Ayyub and his wife ؓ found great difficulty living in the upper storey of the house; they dared not move across the room for fear of walking above the Prophet ﷺ but walked right next to the walls. They were afraid to wash lest water should trickle down through the floor. They repeatedly asked the Prophet ﷺ to move upstairs, but he decline, saying that he received many people, which would inconvenience them greatly should they have to pass through their quarters. Abū Ayyūb ؓ said, "We used to prepare supper and send it up to him. When the plate was sent back to us, I and Umm Ayyūb ؓ used to look for the mark of his hand and eat from there, hoping for the *barakah*. One night we sent his supper up to him, having put onions or garlic in it, but the Messenger of God ﷺ returned it untouched; I saw no trace of his hand in it. I rushed to him in distress, saying, 'O Messenger of God, my father and mother be your ransom! You have returned your supper, and I saw no trace of your hand, whereas before, whenever you returned it, I and Umm Ayyūb sought the trace of your hand, seeking the *barakah*!' He said, 'I found the smell of that plant in it, and I am a man who converses, [with Jibrīl, as another version adds]; as for you, you may eat it!' So we ate it but never used that plant again!" [Ibn Ḥibban, 5:448; Ibn Hishām, 1:499]. Eventually, the Prophet ﷺ agreed to move upstairs.

The house that stood where Abū Ayyūb al-Ansārī's house had been was removed during the latest extension of the *Ḥaram*. Its location is now in the plaza, to the right when exiting from the mosque through *Bab al-Baqī'*, a small distance after the first lamppost.

## 2. Ḥarithah ibn al-Nu'mān's House

This Companion's house stood south of Abū Ayyūb's house in the Banī Ghanm Alley. Ḥarithah, also from Banī al-Najjār, had other houses in the neighbourhood. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ married a new wife, he offered him one of his houses to lodge her [Aḥmad, 6:151; al-Haytamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, 9:313]. The house was eventually purchased by Imām Ḥusayn's great grandson, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, and became known as Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq's house [Ibn Shabbah, 1:259].

## 3. Al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd's House

Imām Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ؑ was appointed governor of Madīnah by the Abbassid *Khalīfah* al-Manṣour (d.158), then by his successor, al-Mahdī. Al-Ḥasan bought a small fort that stood in this location, demolished it, then built his house.

In 1283 H (1853 CE), during the Ottoman period, the house was turned into a public library named after *Shaykh al-Islām* 'Arif Ḥikmat, a Turkish scholar and saint. The building remained until the area was cleared a few years ago and the books transferred to the King 'Abdul-'Azīz Library in the *Muṣallāh* area, where in the Prophet's days the horse market used to be (*Baqī' al-Khayl*).

## 4. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān's Houses

When he first arrived in Madīnah, 'Uthmān ؓ bought a house opposite *Bāb Jibrīl*, which is why it was also called *Bāb 'Uthmān*. He subsequently bought the land around this house, enlarged the building, then built a smaller house behind it. The main house was then called *Dār 'Uthmān al-Kubrā* (the Greater House) and the one

to its east, *Dār ʿUthmān al-Suġhrā* (the Smaller House). It is through the Smaller House that the rebels found entry to his house and assassinated him.

## **The Mosques of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz**

### ***Al-Masājid al-ʿUmariyyah***

A descendant of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb ؓ ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz has been rightly called the fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph. Before becoming *khalīfah*, he was governor of Madīnah from the year eighty-seven to the year ninety-three of the *Hijrah*. At that time, under instructions from the *khalīfah*, he enlarged the Prophet’s mosque and surrounded the room where he ؐ and his two companions are buried with a wall.

More than this, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz also inquired about other places where people knew that the Prophet ؐ had prayed, for many elderly Companions were still in Madīnah, and they and their students knew these places with accuracy. To mark these sites, he erected on each a small square mosque, made of blocks of black volcanic rock from the *ḥarrah*. In each, he built a small *miḥrāb*. These mosques became known as *al-Masājid al-ʿUmariyyah*, and whenever succeeding generations of historians dug to relocate those that had fallen into disuse and been lost over the years, they were always thrilled when they found the typical ʿUmarī architecture that marked a find as authentic. Of these, only a few are still in existence: the Banī Unayf Mosque in the Qubā’ area and the Mosque of the Two Minarets in *Ḥarrat al-Zāhirah* are two examples. Many of the other ʿUmarī mosques have been rebuilt more than once over the years, but the fact that they were rebuilt on the same location and that this was documented provides evidence of the authenticity of their sites.

## A Walk Around the Town Centre

Starting from the Prophet's Mosque, if one walks west, leaving the enclosure of the plaza behind, one comes upon a relatively open area in which there are four mosques. This area is the *Muṣallāh al-ʿĪd*, the feast prayer-area of the Prophet ﷺ. These four mosques are, from left to right, with one's back toward the Prophet's Mosque: ʿUmar's Mosque; the Mosque of the Cloud, or *Masjid al-Ghamāmah*; Abū Bakr's Mosque; and ʿAlī's Mosque. Having visited these mosques, if one carries on due West, starting from the Mosque of the Cloud, one reaches the old Ottoman railway station, just beyond and to the right of an Ottoman mosque of the same period standing in the middle of the roundabout. This is at the limit of a walkable distance though and might better be reached by car. The Ottoman mosque is of no historic consequence, but within the perimeter of the station yard are the Suqīāh Mosque and the well of Abū ʿInabah, where the Prophet ﷺ inspected his forces before setting out for the Battle of Badr and before the conquest of Makkah.

If, after visiting the four mosques of the *Muṣallāh*, one decides not to visit the railway station, but carries on walking north, one will come upon a small municipality garden which marks the place of the Shelter of the Banī Sāʿidah. This is where Abū Bakr was elected *khalīfah* after the Prophet's death. Across the road to the left, beyond the garden, and just adjacent to the bus terminal is the Mosque of the Racing, *Masjid al-Sabq*.

A short walk east from the Prophet's Mosque, to the edge of the surrounding plaza, is the Baqīʿ cemetery, where many Companions are buried along with many of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the Prophet's descendants. If one carries on due east on King ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz Street, along the towering wall of the cemetery, and turns left at the traffic light of the inner ring road, one soon spots the Mosque of the Response, *Masjid al-Ijābah*, ahead on the right.

The last site within walking distance from the Prophet's Mosque lies north along Abū Dharr Street. At some distance, after crossing the inner ring road, on the

right, stands the Mosque of Abū Dharr, originally known as the Mosque of the Prostration, *Masjid al-Sajdah*.

## ***Al-Muṣallā***

This is the open space outside Madīnah of the Prophet's time to the west, and which was still outside the western walls of the old city up until the 1950s, when the wall itself disappeared. The Prophet ﷺ and the *khalīfahs* after him, used to pray both 'Id prayers there—at the end of Ramaḍān and after the Day of 'Arafāt. The whole population of Madīnah came out to participate in or witness the prayer—including young children, and the women who were not able to pray on that day due to their monthly courses, but who sat behind the praying ranks outside of the prayer area. Seven such locations within the *Muṣallāh* were marked by the people of Madīnah and later authenticated by historians. Of these, four may still be seen today, each marked by a mosque. In addition, the *Muṣallāh* is the area which witnessed rain prayers led by the Prophet ﷺ and his successors, as well as funeral prayers, miracles, and many other important events.

The *Muṣallāh* is also one of the areas where the good news of the Prophet's victory at Badr reached the people of Madīnah. The Prophet ﷺ sent Zayd ibn Hārithah ؓ, on his camel, al-Qaswā', and 'Abd Allāh ibn Rawāḥah ؓ to Madīnah with the news of victory once the battle was through. Zayd ؓ was to take the news to lower Madīnah, which is now the town center and the area to the north of it, and 'Abd Allāh ؓ was sent to upper Madīnah, al-ʿĀliya, now called al-ʿAwālī. Zayd ؓ rode into the *Muṣallāh* and raised his voice with the good news. Everyone rushed out to meet him, the Companions exulting with joy, the Jews and hypocrites seething with rage. This is also where, a few days later, they all came out again to receive the Prophet ﷺ and his triumphant army and to gaze at the captive noblemen of Quraysh.

In later years, the area came to be known as *al-Manākhah*, for it became the area where caravans halted and where the camels knelt to load and unload people and goods. It was used in this way until late in the 1930s. The Mosque of the Cloud,

the Mosque of Abū Bakr, and that of ʿAlī, were built by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz when he was governor of Madīnah. The most important of all the mosques of the *Muṣallāh* is the Mosque of the Cloud.

### 1. Mosque of the Cloud, *Masjid al-Ghamāmah*

The mosque is so named because the Prophet ﷺ, having heard the people complain of the drought, walked out to that location and raised his hands, asking God for rain. Having finished his *duʿāʾ*, he prayed two prayer cycles, or *rakʿas*. A cloud appeared in the sky, followed by lightning and thunder, then it rained. By the time the Prophet ﷺ returned to his mosque, the torrent beds had already been flooded. He ﷺ laughed and then said, “I testify that God is Able to do all things and that I am God’s slave and His Messenger” [Abū Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, 1173; al-Hākim, 1:328; Ibn Hībān, 4:227].

It is also in that place that the Prophet ﷺ prayed the funeral prayer over the absent, *ṣalāt al-ghāʾib*, the absent being the Negus of Abyssinia. It was he who had protected the Muslims of the first emigration, and who had accepted the Prophet as God’s Messenger ﷺ. Abū Hurayrah ؓ said, “The Messenger of God ﷺ informed us of the death of the Negus on the day he died. He took them out to the *Muṣallāh*, stood them in ranks, and uttered four *takbīrs*” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Janāʾiz*, 64].

### 2. Mosque of Abū Bakr, *Masjid Abū Bakr*

The Mosque of Abū Bakr, north of the Mosque of the Cloud, is where Abū Bakr ؓ chose to pray the ʿ*Id* prayers during his caliphate, choosing one of the locations where he had previously prayed ʿ*Id* with the Prophet ﷺ.

### 3. Mosque of ʿAlī, *Masjid ʿAlī*

The Mosque of ʿAlī stands further north, and it has been rebuilt recently. It is located where the Prophet ﷺ prayed the first ʿ*Id al-Fiṭr* and ʿ*Id al-Aḍḥāh* prayers. It is also where ʿAlī ؓ held the ʿ*Id* prayer when ʿUthmān ؓ was besieged by the rebels in his house.

#### 4. Mosque of ʿUmar, *Masjid ʿUmar*

The Mosque of ʿUmar, south of the Mosque of the Cloud, is also said to be one of the ʿĪd prayer locations, but its authenticity is less well established.




#### 5. Mosques of ʿUthmān, Bilāl, and of the Barracks, *Masājid ʿUthmān , Bilāl, and al-Qishlah*

These are three historical mosques which also used to be in the *Muṣallāh* area; their locations are known, but the mosques no longer exist.


- a. **Mosque of ʿUthmān, *Masjid ʿUthmān*** – The Mosque of ʿUthmān is also said to have been built on one of the original ʿĪd prayer locations. It used to stand within the old Turkish fortress near the Syrian Gate of the inner city wall. It disappeared though when that segment of the wall and the fortress were dismantled, and it was never rebuilt.
- b. **Mosque of Bilāl, *Masjid Bilāl*** – This is not the new mosque called *Masjid Bilāl*, which is of no historical significance whatsoever, but the mosque which was said to have marked the location of the house of Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ ﷺ. It used to be where the telecommunications building now stands.
- c. **Mosque of the Barracks, *Masjid al-Qishlah*** – This mosque used to stand within the old Ottoman barracks, across the road from the railway station. It was said to be where the house of a certain Ibn Abī al-Janūb was, which marked one of the locations of the Prophet’s ʿĪd prayers.

## 6. *Saqīfat Banī Sā‘idah*


The Shelter of Banī Sā‘idah belonged to Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubādah, the chief of the Khazraj tribe. There the Prophet ﷺ visited him often, sat with the Khazraji Helpers, prayed, and drank water from the nearby well of Buḏā‘ah.

Soon after the Prophet’s death, the Helpers gathered there to decide what to do. They were joined by Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and other Emigrants , and the meeting ended with their all swearing allegiance to Abū Bakr  as successor to the Prophet .

Later on, the shelter became a house for Sa‘d’s son to live in after his marriage. As the new bride entered the house, she noticed that the area reserved f


or the ritual prayer was in the middle of the house, not in one corner as is usual. Upon enquiry, the bridegroom informed her that this was where the Prophet  had prayed, and they had been careful to preserve the exact location so as to also pray in the same place [Ibn Shabbah, 1:72].


## 7. Mosque of the Racing, *Masjid al-Sabq*

The Mosque of the Racing is roughly where the finish line was for the horse races with which his Companions used to prepare their horses for war. It is thought that the Prophet  used to stand there as he left the *Muṣallā* after the ‘*Īd* prayer to make *du‘ā’*.

## Mosque of the Response

### *Masjid al-Ijābah*

This is a mosque that existed as such in the days of the Prophet  and was named *Masjid Banī Mu‘āwiyah*, since it belonged to the Awsī tribe by that name. It is a little more than half a kilometer from the Ḥaram, on the inner ring road, still known to the local people as *Shān‘ al-Sittīn*.

The Prophet  once entered the Banī Mu‘āwiyah Mosque on his return from al-‘Ālia, prayed two *rak‘as* together with his Companions, and then made a



long supplication, after which he turned to them and said, “I have asked my Lord for three things; He granted me two and withheld one. I asked my Lord not to destroy my community by famine; He granted me that. And I asked Him not to destroy my community by drowning; He granted me that. And I asked Him not to allow them to harm each other, but He withheld this one” [Muslim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 20]. In another version of the *ḥadīth*, the first request was that no enemy should exterminate them. Because of this incident, the mosque has become known as the Mosque of the Response.

## Mosque of Abū Dharr, or of the Prostration

### *Masjid Abū Dharr or Masjid al-Sajdah*

This mosque, known today as the Abū Dharr Mosque, has several other more correct names, for there is no historical event which relates it to the famous Companion, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه. Among other names, it has been called *Masjid al-Sāfilah*, because it stands in the lowland area of Madīnah, and *Masjid al-Aswāf*, because this is the name of the palm plantation that was there in the Prophet’s day ﷺ. But its most important names are *Masjid al-Sajdah* and *Masjid al-Shukr*, both of which refer to the same important event.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf said, “The Messenger of God ﷺ left his house, and I followed him. He entered a garden, faced the *qiblah*, fell prostrate, and remained still for so long that I feared that God, August and Majestic, had taken his soul. I approached, then sat down. He raised his head, saying, ‘Who is this?’ I said, “‘Abd al-Raḥmān.’ He asked, ‘What is it?’ I said, ‘O Messenger of God, you went into a prostration [so prolonged that] I feared that God, August and Majestic, had taken your soul.’ He said, ‘Jibrīl عليه السلام came to me with good news, saying, “God, August and Majestic, says, ‘He who invokes blessings upon you, I shall bless him; and he who greets you with peace, I shall greet him with peace,’” so I prostrated myself in gratitude to God, August and Majestic” [Aḥmad, 1:191; al-Hākim, 1:550].

## The Baqī<sup>c</sup> Cemetery

This is the cemetery where the people of Madīnah have buried their dead ever since the days of the Prophet ﷺ. It lies to the east of the Prophet's Mosque, at the edge of the plaza, with stairways leading up to its walled enclosure. It was outside the walls of the old city, and used to be approached from the pre-expansion section of the Prophet's Mosque, through the oldest section of Madīnah, now replaced by the plaza, through an alley called Zuqāq al-Baqī<sup>c</sup>. It was along this alley that the Prophet ﷺ used to walk nightly from his house to visit the dead.

In the old section of the Baqī<sup>c</sup> are buried many members of the Prophet's family, about ten thousand Companions, and thousands of Followers (*tābi<sup>c</sup>īn*), scholars, and men of God. It is open for male visitors every day directly after the *fajr* and *ʿaṣr* prayers.

To the right, as one enters the cemetery gate, is a semicircular enclosure backed by an old stone retaining wall. Buried here are the Prophet's uncle ʿAbbās, his daughter Fāṭimah, his grandson Ḥasan, Imām Ḥusayn's son ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the latter's son Muḥammad al-Bāqir and grandson Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq ﷺ. To the left of the visitor is a small square, also marked out by old stones, containing stone markers for three graves, and further to the left of that is a larger rectangle with nine markers. In the first area are the Prophet's remaining three daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, and Umm Kulthūm ﷺ. In the second area are nine of his wives: Sawdah, ʿĀ'ishah, Ḥaṣṣah, Umm Salamah, Zaynab bint Khuzaymah, Zaynab bint Jaḥsh, Juwayriyah, Umm Ḥabībah, and Ṣafīyah ﷺ.

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ is also buried in the Baqī<sup>c</sup>, but his grave lies far from the gate in the eastern section, marked by a raised cement platform. Having been murdered by the rebels, who still held sway over the city, he was buried far from the main burial area, secretly by night.

As for the merits of al-Baqī<sup>c</sup>, the Prophet ﷺ once said, "I shall be the first to come out of the earth, then Abū Bakr, then ʿUmar; then I shall come to the people of the Baqī<sup>c</sup>, and they shall be gathered with me; then I shall wait for the people of Makkah, so that I shall be gathered between the [inhabitants of the] Two

Sanctuaries” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 18, Ibn Ḥibbān, 9:23,24; al-Ḥākim, 3:68]. And on another occasion, as he was standing there, he ﷺ said, “Do you see this cemetery? God will resurrect seventy thousand from it on Resurrection Day, [their faces] like the moon on the night when it is full, who shall enter the Garden without prior judgment.” ‘Ukāshah ibn Miḥṣan ﷺ stood up saying, “And I, O Messenger of God?” He said, “And you!” Another man rose saying, “And I, O Messenger of God?” He said, “‘Ukāshah has preceded you to it!” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Riqāq*, 50, Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān*, 367].

## A Drive Around Madīnah

There are many historic sites in and around Madīnah not within easy walking distance from the Prophet’s Mosque. Many of these sites are known to almost every Muslim, such as the Mīqāt Mosque, where every pilgrim doing *hajj* or ‘*umrah* from Madīnah must change into *iḥrām*; *Masjid Qubā’*, the first mosque built by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions together; *Masjid al-Jumu‘ah*; *Masjid al-Qiblatayn*; and Mount Uḥud. Other places are not so familiar by name, although most Muslims know of the events that took place there, such as many of the sites on or around *Jabal Sal‘* which witnessed the Battle of the Trench. Then there are the places whose names are relatively unremembered amongst ordinary Muslims and whose events are also relatively unknown, such as *Ḥarrat al-Zāhirah*, the mountains of ‘Ayr and Thawr, *Wādī Boṭhān*, and *Masjid Banī Unayf*. Of course, all these events and places are faithfully stored and recounted in *ḥadīth* and historical books, but what is extraordinary about all those mentioned here is that their actual locations are still known, and one can see these places with one’s own eyes. Seeing this landscape, however much altered it may be, helps one to visualize those events, and forcefully brings to life the *sīrah* of the Best of Mankind ﷺ.

## Sites to the West

### Mosque of Banī Dīnār, *Masjid Banī Dīnār*

The Mosque of Banī Dīnār is located in the area where the Helper tribe of Banī Dīnār used to dwell. It is one of the places in Madīnah which the Prophet ﷺ used to visit and pray at often [Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, 1:64].

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه had married a woman of Banī Dīnār. He fell ill there, and the Prophet ﷺ visited him. The people asked him to choose a spot to pray in so that they would make it their place of prayer thereafter. He prayed where the mosque now stands [Samhudā, *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 3:866].

### Al-Suqīā Mosque, *Masjid al-Suqīā*

This small, three domed mosque lies within the perimeter of the old Ottoman railway station. This stretch of land, called *Ḥarrat al-Suqīā*, is where the Prophet's first halt was on his way to the Battle of Badr. On that day, Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān of the second year of the *Hijrah*, he ﷺ asked for water for his ablutions; then turning towards the *qiblah*, raised his hands to his Lord saying, “O God! Ibrāhīm was Your slave and intimate friend; he prayed for *barakah* for the people of Makkah. I am Your slave and Your Messenger, I pray for the people of Madīnah, that You bless their *mudd* and *ṣā'* twice as much as you blessed them for the people of Makkah, and add to each *barakah* two more!” [Al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 67, 71; Aḥmad, 1:115; Ibn Ḥibbān, 6:23].

He lined up his men and inspected them, turning back the youngsters. Then, as he marched out to Badr, he prayed for his men, “O God! They are barefoot, so mount them! They are bare, so clothe them! They are hungry, so satiate them! And they are poor, so enrich them from Your favours!” [Al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, 2:323; Waqidī, 1:23,24].

These events took place in the stretch of land between the mosque and the well of Abū 'Inabah, where today stands a small square Ottoman building with a water reservoir on the roof. This piece of land was bought by the Companion, Sa'd

ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ. There used to be wells there from which water was drawn for the Prophet ﷺ and transported to him every other day [Ibn Shabbah, 1:188]. The location of these wells of al-Suqiāh is today outside the station compound, to the south of the mosque under the asphalt road.

## **Well of Abū ʿInabah**

Many years after he first stopped there to inspect his army on the way to Badr, the Prophet ﷺ stopped again at this well to inspect his army, which had now grown from three hundred to ten thousand men, setting out for the conquest of Makkah.

## ***Ḥarrat al-Zāhirah***

This is the stretch of lava from *Ḥarrat al-Suqiāh* to *Wādī al-ʿAqīq*. It is the old caravan route to Makkah, Badr, and Yanbu, and is the way the Prophet ﷺ took almost every time he moved south. Because of this, it has many historical sites upon it.

## **Mosque of the Two Minarets, *Masjid al-Manāratayn***

The meaning of *Masjid al-Manāratayn* is the Mosque of The Two Minarets, but the minarets in question were actually two pointed yellowish hills to the north of *Ḥarrat al-Zāhirah*, where the mosque was built. This mosque is to the right of the main Anbaryah Road, less than one kilometer after the railway station, driving west. It was erected to commemorate one of the occasions on which the Prophet ﷺ imparted his wisdom to the Companions.

Once, as they were walking by that spot, they saw the rotting carcass of a sheep. The Prophet ﷺ asked, “What do you think this sheep is worth to its owner?” “Nothing, O Messenger of God,” the Companions replied. He said, “This world is worth even less to God than this sheep to its owner” [Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-Wafāʾ*, 3:879].

## Valley of al-‘Aqīq, *Wādī al-‘Aqīq*

The ‘Aqīq Valley runs along the western side of Madīnah, within the boundary of the western lava tract, *al-Ḥarrat al-Gharbiyyah*, which constitutes the western boundary of the sanctuary of Madīnah. It is known as the Blessed Valley, for the Prophet ﷺ once said, “someone came to me last night from my Lord, saying, “Pray in this blessed valley and say, ‘An ‘umrah combined with a *hajj*!’” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 16].

Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه said, “We were with the Prophet ﷺ at the Mu‘arras, and he said, ‘Someone came to me saying, “You are in the Blessed Valley!’”” [Al-Bukhārī, *Tārīkh*, 1:415].

Because of this, many Companions and Followers, after the Prophet ﷺ departed from this world, built themselves houses and mansions in that valley, of which the mansion and mosque of ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr still stands today.

‘Urwah’s elder brother, ‘Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه, was the first baby born to the Emigrants in Madīnah, but ‘Urwah himself was born after the Prophet’s time, therefore deserving the title of Follower, not that of Companion, like his brother. ‘Urwah was a scholar and one of the main sources of the Prophet’s biography.

## Mosque of the Tree or Mīqāt, *Masjid al-Shajarah or al-Mīqāt*

This mosque is also called *Masjid Dhul-Ḥulayfah*, after the name of the area and *Masjid al-Iḥrām*, because this is where pilgrims perform the rites of entering into *iḥrām*, or consecration, before setting out from Madīnah for *hajj* or ‘umrah. Dhu al-Ḥulayfah is twelve kilometers from Madīnah, and its current name is *Abyār ‘Alī*, ‘Alī’s Wells. The valley of Dhu al-Ḥulayfah holds two sites that relate to the Prophet ﷺ.

During the Prophet’s time, there was a mosque at Dhu al-Ḥulayfah demarcated by a square of stones laid out upon the ground, the *miḥrāb* of which was a tree. The second site was about fifty metres to the east of this and was called the Mu‘arras, which means “a place where a traveller halts by night to sleep.” ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, “The Messenger of God ﷺ left by way of the tree and

entered by way of al-Mu‘arras. When he was on his way to Makkah, he prayed in the Mosque of the Tree, but on his return, he prayed in Dhu al-Ḥulayfah, in the valley, then spent the night there” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-‘Umrah*, 14, Aḥmad, 3:310].

## Sites to the North

### The Battleground of Uḥud

It is at the foot of Mount Uḥud where the Battle of Uḥud took place. There, the three thousand invading pagans of Makkah were met by seven hundred defending Muslims. The pagan army, approaching from the South, halted at Dhul-Ḥulayfa, near where the current *Mīqāt* Mosque stands today. Then they moved through the valley now called *Tarīq al-Jāmi‘āt*, passing between the hills of *Jumā’ al-‘Āqir* to their South and *Jumā’ Umm Khālīd* to their North, to camp at al-Jurf. The next day they resumed their march to approach Mount Uḥud from the western side and organized their base roughly where the fire brigade building now stands.

The Muslim force was placed by the Prophet ﷺ with their backs to Uḥud, with a small force of fifty archers protecting their rear on the Hill of ‘Aynayn, which came to be known from that day as Archers’ Hill, *Jabal al-Rumāh*.

The beginning of the battle was a clear Muslim victory, so much so that the pagan Makkans began to flee the field. Then, in contravention to the Prophet’s express orders, most of the archers came down from the hill when they saw that their army was winning the day. Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, later to become one of the greatest Muslim generals, on that day was commanding one wing of the pagan cavalry, which up to that point had been useless against the archers. Seizing the opportunity, he sent some of his horse up the hill to kill the few remaining archers, then swept his right wing of the Qurayshī cavalry around the hill and into the victorious Muslim army from their rear. The Muslim victory of a moment before suddenly turned into chaos and defeat.

The Prophet ﷺ successfully rallied some of his men and repelled many concerted attacks against his person, though not before suffering many wounds himself. Then, he began an organized retreat toward the slopes of Mount Uḥud.

Quraysh felt that they had won, and the count of the dead bore this out, but because of their own losses they were unable to press their advantage and conquer the city itself. They retreated the way they had come, with the Prophet and his wounded men in pursuit.

At the northeastern foot of the Archers' Hill is where the Prophet's beloved uncle, Ḥamza was killed by Waḥshī's javelin, and where he and the other martyrs were laid to rest. The Prophet called Ḥamza the Master of all Martyrs, and the Lion of God and that of His Messenger. When the Prophet ﷺ visited the martyrs in later years, he said, "Visit them, for by He in Whose Hand my soul is, none shall visit them till the Day of Arising and greet them with *salām*, without their greeting him back with *salām* [Al-Haytamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, 3:6, 6:123; Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, 1:108].

The present burial place of Ḥamzah and the other martyrs is not in the original spot. This is due to a flood which threatened the graves in the year 40 A.H. which necessitated the moving of the martyrs to their present location [Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah al-Munawwara*, 1:133; ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, 3:563].

### ***Masjid al-Dir', the Mosque of the Coat of Mail, or Masjid al-Badā'i'***

This small mosque still stands in an alley to the right of the road currently going from the town centre to Mount Uḥud. It is called *al-Badā'i'* since this had been the name of the area in the days of the Prophet ﷺ and al-Shaykhayn since it stands next to the two hillocks by that name. As for its name, *Masjid al-Dir'*, the Mosque of the Coat of Mail, it may be because the Prophet , who is known to have marched to Uḥud in two coats of mail, one upon the other, may have donned the second one in that location.

This is where the Prophet halted on his way to the Battle of Uḥud to pray *Maghrib* and *'Ishā'*, review his troops, and turn back the youngsters. This was confirmed by Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ who said, "The Prophet ﷺ prayed in the Mosque at the *Badā'i'*, at the Shaykhayn, and spent the night there till dawn" [Ibn Shabba, 1:72]. And Umm Salama said, "I brought the Messenger of God ﷺ a roasted



shoulder at the *Badā'i*<sup>c</sup>, he ate it then spent the night there till morning, then he proceeded to Uḥud on Saturday” [Ibn Shabba, *Tārikh*, 1:72].

### ***Masjid al-Mustarāḥ***

This mosque, in the area where the Banī Ḥāritha tribe of the Aws used to dwell, became known as *Masjid al-Mustarāḥ*, the Mosque of the Resting Place, because it is thought that the Prophet, who used to visit the martyrs of Uḥud every year with his companions, stopped there on the way to rest. The mosque stands on the main road from the town centre to Uḥud, on the right hand side, some distance after *Masjid al-Badā'i*<sup>c</sup>.

## **Sites to the South**

### ***Masjid Qubā'***

Built by the Prophet ﷺ as soon as he arrived from Makkah, this mosque has numerous merits, among which is the fact that the Prophet visited it almost every Saturday to pray there [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb faḍl al-ṣalā fi masjid Makkah wal-Madīnah*, 2,3,4; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, 515 to 521] and that he informed his Companions that a prayer there attracted the reward of an ‘*umrah*. He ﷺ said, “He who performs his ritual purification at home, then comes to the Mosque of Qubā’ and prays two *rak‘as*, his reward will be similar to that of an ‘*umrah*” [al-Nasā’ī, *Kitāb al-Masājid*, 9; Ibn Mājah, *Kitāb iqāmat al-ṣalāh*, 197; Aḥmad, 3:487].

When the Prophet ﷺ first arrived from Makkah with Abū Bakr ᷺, they retired to a palm grove belonging to Kulthūm ibn al-Hadm, a man from the Banī ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, the Awsi tribe that used to occupy the territory surrounding the current Qubā’ Mosque. The people of Madīnah came to greet them, as they sat in the shade. When the sun rose in the sky and the heat grew more intense, Abū Bakr ᷺ rose to his feet and, using his shawl, shaded the Prophet ﷺ from the rays of the sun. Thereafter this location became known as *Makān al-Taḏlil*, the Place of the Shading, and a mosque was erected where the palm tree stood, the ruins of which still exist today, but out of

sight of visitor because on private property. Near to the ruins of the mosque is a well, still used to irrigate the plantation, called the Well of ‘Adhq, from which the Prophet ﷺ is known to have drank on many occasions.

Madīnah’s historian, Ibn Shabbah, wrote that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه came to Qubā’ in the afternoon, entered the mosque, asked for a green palm branch, used it to dust the *qiblah* wall clean, and then said, addressing the mosque, “By God! Had I been in a remote region, I would have undertaken a camel journey to visit you!” Similar accounts were given by Al-Bukhārī in his *Tārīkh*, Ibn Sa‘d and ‘Abd al-Razzāq. Ibn Shabbah also wrote that Anas ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه, who used to be the Prophet’s servant as a boy, once came to the mosque at Qubā’, prayed two *rak‘as*, then sat down. The people of the village sat around him. He said, “Transcendent is God! How great is the merit of this mosque! Had I been a month’s journey away, it would have been worth the journey! He who leaves his house, heading for it, and prays four *rak‘as* there, God sends him back with the reward of an ‘*umrah*” [Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, 1:46, 1:42; Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-Wafā’*, 3:803, 804].

When the Prophet ﷺ first built the Qubā’ Mosque with his Companions, the *qiblah* was towards Jerusalem, then they changed it to face Makkah upon receiving the divine order. On both occasions, the Prophet ﷺ set the direction of the *qiblah* himself, commenting that Jibrīl had shown it to him [Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, 2:244; Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-Wafā’*, 3:804].

### ***Masjid al-Jumu‘ah***

This is where the Prophet ﷺ prayed his first *jumu‘ah* in Madīnah. For when he left Qubā’ that Friday, on his she-camel, Qaswā, heading to what is now the town center, but was then the dwellings of Banī al-Najjār, it took him half a day to reach where the Jumu‘ah Mosque now stands. It is a very short distance, but the tribesmen of Madīnah came from left and right, inviting him as their guest, saying they had the men, the arms, and the might to defend him. People flocked to greet him or to ask him questions. With his usual gracious patience, he spoke to every one

of them, answering their questions; then he told them, “Leave the she-camel, for she is under orders!”

It was midday when he reached the dwellings of Banī Sālim ibn ‘Awf. They told him he had honoured their cousins in Qubā’, the Banī ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, by accepting their hospitality, and that unless he honoured them as well, their cousins would remain more honourable than they till the end of time. Hearing this, the Prophet ﷺ stopped there and prayed his first Jumu‘ah prayer [Ibn Hishām, 1:494,495].

The original mosque was erected on that spot by the Companions and named the Banī Sālim Mosque; but due to the event whose place it marked, the mosque has come to be known as the Friday Mosque, *Masjid al-Jumu‘ah* [Ibn Shabba, *Tārikh*, 1:68].

### ***Masjid ‘Itbān ibn Mālīk***

Across the street from *Masjid al-Jumu‘ah* is a small roofless mosque marking the location of the mosque of the Companion, ‘Itbān ibn Mālīk ؓ, a Khazrajī Helper who fought at the Battle of Badr. He once came to the Prophet ﷺ saying, “O Messenger of God, my eyesight is weakening and I lead my people in prayer. When the rains come, the valley separating us is flooded, and I cannot go to their mosque to lead them in prayer. I wish, O Messenger of God, that you come to pray in my house, that I may make of it a place of prayer.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “I shall do so, God willing” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, 46]. This was the regular practice of the Companions, for they loved to pray where the Prophet ﷺ had prayed, and well knew that *barakah* would remain in that location till the end of time. There are numerous accounts to this effect on record. The rest of this narration in al-Bukhārī’s collection describes how the Prophet ﷺ, accompanied by Abū Bakr ؓ, went to ‘Itbān’s house, immediately asked him where he wanted him to pray, stood where ‘Itbān showed him, and prayed two *rak‘as* with all those present praying behind him.

## **Masjid Banī Unayf**

The Mosque of Banī Unayf is named after the tribe in whose area it was erected. They were from the tribe of Baliy, not from the two main tribes of ‘Aws and Khazraj. The Prophet ﷺ visited Ṭalḥah ibn al-Barā’ ؓ in this area when he was sick; then after his death, he returned to offer condolences and pray for him. Ṭalḥah ؓ was a child who loved the Prophet ﷺ dearly. Realizing he was about to die, he told his people not to call the Prophet ﷺ, for it was nighttime and the area was full of Jews, and he feared for the Prophet’s safety. The Prophet ﷺ was informed the next morning. He came to the grave, stood the people in ranks, raised his hands, then said, “O God, meet Ṭalḥah in such a manner that You smile at him and he smiles at You!” [Al-Iṣāba, 2:218]. This particular boy was known for his overwhelming devotion and attachment to the Prophet ﷺ. He had once told him, “O Messenger of God, command me to do whatever you wish, for I shall not disobey any command of yours!” The Prophet ﷺ wondered at so much determination in a child. He said, “Go kill your father!” The boy turned around and hastened away, only to be called back, “Come here. I was not sent with the disruption of kinship bonds!” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id*, 9:365].

The place where the Prophet ﷺ prayed during this last visit was preserved and regularly sprinkled with water by the Companions, until the mosque was built [Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, 3:875].

It is also said that on the day he first arrived at Qubā’, the Prophet ﷺ prayed the *fajr* prayer in that location, and this is why the mosque is also called *Masjid Musbiḥ*, the Morning Mosque.

The palm grove to the south of the mosque is where the southern *Thaniyyat al-Wadā‘* was, the Farewell Pass, where travellers were bid farewell and received home from their journeys. This is where the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ were first received by the people of Madīnah and welcomed with songs and tambourines.

## ***Wādī Boṭhān***

The Valley of Boṭhān is one of the major watercourses in Madīnah. It starts at the heights south of the city, and used to run through today's Qurbān Street. It is joined by smaller valleys as it runs northwards to end at Zaghābah, to the west of Mount Uḥud, where Madīnah's three major torrent beds meet. It is a blessed valley, for the Prophet ﷺ said, "Boṭhān is on one of the pools of Paradise" [Bazzār, *Kashf al-Astār*, 2:58, Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:167].

## **Mosque of the Siege of Banī Qurayẓah**

This mosque marks the place where the Prophet ﷺ prayed during the siege of the Jewish tribe of Banī Qurayẓah. They had broken their treaty with the Prophet ﷺ and opened negotiations to join forces with the pagans besieging Madīnah during the Battle of the Trench. Upon the Prophet's return from the Trench after God had dispersed the pagan forces, Jibrīl ﷺ came to him, saying, "Put not down your armour; God wants you to go to Banī Qurayẓah!"

During the ensuing siege, the Prophet ﷺ prayed in the house of a woman which was on that site, and which was later incorporated into the eastern end of the mosque built by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdal-ʿAzīz.

Here it was that the Prophet ﷺ sent for Saʿd ibn Muʿādh ؓ, who had been wounded in the Battle of the Trench. He had been Banī Qurayẓah's ally before Islam, and they were ready to submit to his judgment. Saʿd ؓ came on a donkey. When he drew near to the woman's house, now marked by the mosque, the Prophet ﷺ said to the Helpers, "Rise for your master!" They told Saʿd ؓ, "They have accepted your judgement." He said, "My judgement is that their warriors be killed, their families enslaved, and their possessions divided." The Messenger of God ﷺ said, "You have judged with the judgement of God, August and Majestic, and the judgement of His Messenger" [Aḥmad, 3:22, 71] .

## Sites to the Northwest

### Mount Sal<sup>c</sup>, *Jabal Sal<sup>c</sup>*

The Hill of Sal<sup>c</sup> stands to the northwest of old Madīnah. Now surrounded by houses from all sides, as the Prophet ﷺ had foretold. It used to be a good distance from town and a good vantage point, so that the best old photographs of Madīnah were taken from there.

It played a prominent role during the Battle of the Trench, for there the Prophet ﷺ as well as the Companions had pitched their tents, and many of the most important events of the battle took place in the areas around it.

### The Seven Mosques, *Al-Masājid al-Sab<sup>c</sup>*

The Seven Mosques are said to mark the places where the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions stood guard during the Battle of the Trench. However, Seven Mosques, as used today for the name of the area at the Hill of Sal<sup>c</sup> is a misnomer, since there used to be only six in that place, the seventh being on the Hill of the Banner, *Jabal al-Rāyah*, which is also called the Hill of Dhubāb, and which lies a fair distance from the Hill of Sal<sup>c</sup>, albeit along the course of the Trench. Of these seven, only three have been historically authenticated. They are: the Mosque of Victory, *Masjid al-Fath*; the Mosque of Salmān the Persian, *Masjid Salmān al-Fārisī*; and the Mosque of the Banner, *Masjid al-Rāyah*.

As late as the tenth century of the *Hijrah*, in the days of Imām Samhūdī, there used to be only these three mosques, though he reported seeing the ruins of two more. It is not clear how there came to be seven and how they received their names. We therefore shall deal only with the three authenticated mosques.

- a. ***Masjid al-Fath*** – The Mosque of Victory is a small mosque which stands on the rock outcropping on which they had pitched the Prophet's tent during the battle ﷺ. There he prayed to his Lord, day after day, to relieve the sufferings of the Muslims and vanquish their enemies. Things were becoming very difficult,

and he had received news that the Jews of Banī Qurayzah had tried to attack the women and children in the city. On the third day of the siege, on a Wednesday, between *ẓuhr* and *‘aṣr*, Jibrīl came to the Prophet ﷺ with the good news that God had responded to his prayer and promised him victory. Soon afterward, a tempest dispersed the pagan confederates, and the siege was lifted.

The Companion Jābir ibn ‘Abdallāh رضي الله عنه said, “Never did I suffer any hardship from then on but that I waited for that time [Wednesday, between *ẓuhr* and *‘aṣr* at the Mosque of Victory] and prayed, then recognized the response” [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id*, 4:12; Aḥmad, 3:332; Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:58,60]. This mosque, and probably also that of Salmān were built by ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.

- b. ***Masjid Salmān al-Fārisī*** – The Mosque of Salmān is the mosque at the foot of the outcropping upon which stands the Mosque of Victory. Its importance lies in that, before climbing the hill, the Prophet ﷺ prayed there [Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:59].

c. **Mosque of the Banner or of Dhubāb, *Masjid al-Rāyah* or *Dhubāb*** –

The Mosque of the Banner is where the Prophet ﷺ pitched his tent to supervise the digging of the trench. He also prayed there [Al-Haytamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id*, 4:14; Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:61]. The original mosque built there was one of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s. At the foot of the northern side of the hill was the white rock that Salmān رضي الله عنه and his companions were unable to break. Rather than alter the course of the trench as laid out by the Prophet ﷺ, they sent Salmān رضي الله عنه up the hill to the Prophet’s tent to ask him what to do. He came down with Salmān رضي الله عنه, took the pick, and struck the rock. A light flashed, illuminating Madīnah from one lava tract to the other, as if it was a lamp lit in a dark night. The Prophet ﷺ said, “*Allāhu Akbar!*” He struck it again; another flash shot forth; he said, “*Allāhu Akbar!*” Then he struck it a third time. Again, a flash of light shot forth, and again he said, “*Allāhu Akbar!*” The rock was

shattered by the third blow. They asked him about the three flashes of light, and he said, “The first one lit up for me the palaces of Ḥīrah [in ‘Irāq] and the cities of Khosroes [in ‘Irāq and Irān], as if they were dogs’ teeth, and Jibrīl ﷺ informed me that my nation is to overcome them. The second one lit up for me the red palaces of the land of the Byzantines, as if they were dogs’ teeth, and Jibrīl ﷺ informed me that my nation is to overcome them. The third lit up for me the palaces of San‘ā [in Yemen], as if they were dogs’ teeth, and Jibrīl ﷺ told me that my nation is to overcome them!” [Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, 4:101].

## Other Sites at Mount Sal<sup>c</sup>

The three historically authentic mosques of the Seven Mosques area are not the only authentic sites preserved around *Jabal Sal<sup>c</sup>*. Two worth mentioning are about half a kilometer south of the Mosque of Victory. They are the Mosque and Cave of Banī Ḥarām, so called because the area belonged to the tribe of that name, to which the well-known Companion, Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allāh belonged ﷺ. The mosque now stands among the houses at the foot of the hill, whereas the cave is a few minutes climb up the hill itself.

- a. **Mosque of Banī Ḥarām, Masjid Banī Ḥarām** – There has been much argument whether the Prophet ﷺ ever prayed in this mosque. However, it is still of historical importance because it stands in the area of the clan of Banī Ḥarām, of the tribe of Banī Salimah, where the house of Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh ﷺ used to be, and this house is where the following event took place.

Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh said, “As the trench was being dug, I noticed that the Prophet ﷺ suffered from severe hunger. I returned to my wife saying, ‘Do you have anything, for I have noticed that the Messenger of God ﷺ suffers severe hunger.’ She brought out a bag with some barley in it, and we had a small sheep in the house. We slaughtered the animal and ground the barley; then I returned to the Messenger of God ﷺ and spoke to him secretly, ‘O Messenger of God,



we have slaughtered an animal we had and have ground a measure of barley. Please come with a few people.’ The Prophet ﷺ raised his voice saying, ‘O People of the Trench! Jābir has prepared some food; you are all welcome!’ Then he said, ‘Do not take the pot off the fire, and do not bake your dough until I come!’ When he arrived, he proceeded to break the bread, and put the meat on it. He took some food out of the pot and served his Companions, keeping both the pot and the oven covered. He went on breaking the bread, putting the meat on top of it and serving his Companions until they were all satiated; then he said, ‘Eat and give to other people for they have suffered hunger!’” [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Aḥīmah*, 48].

- b. Cave of Banī Ḥarām** – Also known as the Cave of the Prostration, this is a small cave on the western face of the hill of Salʿ, not far from the Mosque of Banī Ḥarām. There used to be a spring near the cave and the Prophet ﷺ seems to have spent some nights in that cave during the Siege of the Trench, for it was away from the front line [Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:166].

On another occasion, when Muʿādh ibn Jabal ؓ was looking for the Prophet ﷺ, he kept inquiring after his whereabouts until he finally found him in prostration in that cave. He remained in prostration for a long time, then said, “Jibrīl came to me here and said, ‘God, Blessed and Exalted is He, gives you His *salām* and says to you, “How would you like Me to treat your community?”’ I said, ‘God knows best.’ So he went, then returned saying, ‘He says to you, “I shall never distress you on account of your community.”’ So I prostrated myself, for the best that a slave can do to draw nearer to God is prostration” [Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 2:288].

## **Mosque of the Two Qiblas, *Masjid al-Qiblatayn***

The Mosque of the Two Qiblahs, which was previously called the Mosque of Banī Salimah, stands in what used to be their territory to the north of Madīnah, on the road to Tabūk. It is within the city now, a few kilometers from the Seven Mosques.

The Prophet ﷺ still prayed toward Jerusalem for about sixteen or seventeen months after his arrival in Madīnah. However, because contrary to his hopes he found the Jews very hostile, he began to ask God to give him the *qiblah* of his choice, the *Kaʿbah* in Makkah [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, 31].

The order to change direction came on a day when the Prophet ﷺ was visiting Umm Bishr ؓ of Banī Salimah to console her for the loss of her son. When it was time for *ẓuhr*, the noon prayer, he prayed in the Banī Salimah Mosque. In the middle of the prayer, after the first two *rakʿas*, Jibrīl ؑ came with the order to face Makkah, which the Prophet ﷺ immediately did, along with his Companions. The result was that they prayed the first two *rakʿas* towards Jerusalem and the other two towards Makkah [Ibn Saʿd, 1:242].

The Companion, ʿAbbād ibn Bishr ؓ, having prayed with the Prophet ﷺ, walked to Banī Ḥārithah, whose mosque later came to be called *Masjid al-Mustarāḥ*, only to find them in the middle of their *ʿasr* prayer; he informed them of what had happened, and they immediately changed their positions; the women moved to take the men's place, and they all continued the rest of their prayer facing Makkah [Al-Haytamī, *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid*, 2:14]. By the time the news reached Qubāʾ, it was already time for the *fajr* prayer [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, 32; *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīn*, *sūrah* 2].

As for the first prayer the Prophet ﷺ prayed towards Makkah in his own mosque, it was the *ʿasr* prayer of that same day.

## Al-Jurf

If one drives on due north, past the Qiblatayn Mosque, one passes the main Madīnah general hospital, King Fahd Hospital, on the left, and then comes to a roundabout. The area surrounding the roundabout and extending eastward is called al-Jurf. It is outside the boundaries of the Sanctuary of Madīnah, and is mentioned in a *ḥadīth*. The *Dajjāl*, the Impostor of the end of time, will halt there to lay siege to Madīnah, but will not be allowed to enter it [Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb faḍāʾil al-Madīnah*, 9; Muslim, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, 123].

## **Sources**

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Ibn Mājah

Ibn Sa<sup>ʿ</sup>d

Ibn Shabbah

Muslim

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Samhūdī

Al-Ṭabarānī

Al-Tirmidhī

